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ROSSEL'S POSTHUMOUS PAPERS.

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ROSSEL'S POSTHUMOUS PAPERS.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE circumstances attending the connection of Captain Rossel with the Commune of Paris, and his subsequent execution in consequence of that connection, have excited so much interest in England, that I trust no apology will be considered necessary for offering to the British public a translation of the Posthumous Papers containing his own explanation of the circumstances which induced him to give his services to the Communists.

In the letter of the 19th of March to the Minister of War, tendering his resignation of the post of Chief of the Corps of Engineers at the Camp at Nevers, Rossel says: 'I have no hesitation in siding with the party which has not signed the Treaty of Peace, and which does not number

amongst its adherents the generals guilty of capitulation.'

From this, and from similar passages, it is evident that when he joined the Commune, it was with the hope that his services would be employed, not against his own countrymen, but against the foes of his country. He reckoned upon the neutrality, if not upon the indirect assistance, of the Versailles Government, and was led away by a patriotic enthusiasm, which is one of the distinguishing features of his character, to believe that the Commune would form the nucleus of a national resistance.

As impartial as he is patriotic, he has hardly been brought face to face with the Communist leaders before he admits his mistake; but he feels that he has crossed the Rubicon, and that to draw back would be dishonourable. With the whole energy of his nature he struggles against disappointment and humiliation, hoping against hope that he may at length be able to achieve something for his unfortunate country. In the depths of his heart he feels

that his cause is desperate, that failure is inevitable; and yet he fights on, preferring, 'in spite of all the disgraceful acts of the Commune, to have fought on the side of the vanquished rather than on that of the victorious party.'

Independently of the fact that Rossel's Posthumous Papers present a complete apology for his conduct from his own point of view, they are interesting in a historical sense. His appreciation of the prominent men with whom he came in contact is at once racy and profound. The passage in which he sets forth the equal difficulty of blaming or praising Gambetta, is a good specimen of the clearness of his judgment.

Through all his letters to his relations there runs a vein of deep feeling; and he has an unusually clear style and simple way of telling his story, which inevitably arouses the sympathy of the reader, whether he be French or English.

THE TRANSLATOR.

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ROSSEL'S POSTHUMOUS PAPERS.

Letter to his Father.

Camp at Nevers, Feb. 18, 1871.

MY DEAREST FATHER,

I have really so many things to tell you, that I don't know where to begin. I begin by what is most interesting to you. I am Acting-colonel of Engineers, and I shall never be either captain or commandant, or lieutenant-colonel, for I shall leave the service if the shameful peace with which we are threatened is concluded; and if the war continues, I shall know how to obtain for myself so clearly-defined a position, that no one will think of questioning it. You know that before the war I was already highly disgusted

with the vast association of incapables who held high rank; and I was convinced that the most fortunate and intelligent efforts would never have any chance in this army against quiet mediocrity. I have now broken completely with the corps of Engineers and the Committee; the Frossards and Coffinières are sufficiently fine specimens of the system of promotion in the French army to induce me to refrain willingly from competing with them.

Since the commencement of the war, I have had a sufficient number of strange adventures; but a remarkable fact, and one which will astonish you, is, that I have never been ordered under fire. I have been under fire occasionally, but solely for my own satisfaction, and I have run but little danger.

At Metz, I was not long in being convinced of the absolute incapacity of our chiefs, whether generals or staff-officers — a hopeless incapacity admitted by the whole army; and as I am in the habit of carrying out my conclusions to the end, even before the battle of August 14th I had planned the means of expelling the whole clique,

and the measures I had imagined were not quite impracticable. I remember one evening with my comrade—a man of generous and resolute mind, whom I had quite won over to my way of thinking. We were walking before those noisy residences of the Rue Desclercs, filled at all times with horses, carriages, and gold-laced stewards, and the whole tumult of an insolent and riotous staff. We were examining the entrances and the positions of the guards, and discussing how, with some fifty resolute men, it would be easy to carry off all those fellows. We were looking for those fifty men; but we never succeeded in finding more than ten.

On the 14th of August, towards evening, we saw from the top of the Serperoix ramparts the horizon from St. Julien to Quentin lighted up by the battle-fires. On the 16th the army had crossed the Moselle, and was face to face with the enemy. As soon as I was freed from my service, as the trains of wounded who arrived announced a great battle, I hastened on horseback by Moulins and Châtel to the plateau of Gravelotte, where I wit-

nessed a portion of the action side by side with a magnificently-commanded battery of mitrailleuses. Once again, on the day of the capitulation, I saw the captain of that battery. On the 18th I went again in the evening to see the battle, and met General Grenier. He was returning after having lost his division, which was quietly dispersing, having exhausted its ammunition, and fought seven hours without being relieved. On the morrow the blockade was completed.

Nevertheless I continued to seek enemies for those incapable generals. On the 31st August and 1st September they tried to give battle, and could not even manage to get their troops engaged. The unfortunate Lebœuf tried, it is said, to get killed, and only succeeded in getting a lot of honest men killed in the stupidest manner. On the evening of the 31st I went to see the battle at Fort St. Julien; and on the morning of September 1st I went to the rear of the battle-field. Among others, I there saw Laillard, now a chef d'escadron, who was awaiting with two batteries the moment for going into action. In the after-

noon, when I returned to the battle-field, they were in full retreat. Seldom have I felt a deeper mortification than when I saw our last chance of taking the offensive thus shamefully thrown away; for each time there was fighting going on, I regained confidence.

At last the disaster of Sedan and the proclamation of the Republic became known. This was about the 6th September. That evening I was at Madame Cuvier's, and Father Prost showed great confidence in the falseness of the bad news. I was laughed at for believing in them, and looked upon as a dangerous alarmist. At last I was induced laughingly to express my opinion of the situation; and I told them that we should end by capitulating, fixing as the time when they would believe me the day when we should march out without arms before the Prussians. 'What,' said Prost, 'won't you even let us have our arms?' Those who heard what I said that night have reminded me of it since.

There were at Metz hardly any officers of my standing in the Engineers; Padovani alone was of

the same promotion. Otherwise, with the aid of some of the vigorous men I know, something might have been done. But some said, 'It is impossible.' To which I answered, 'Impossible perhaps, but absolutely necessary.' Others imagined that Bazaine 'had his plan,' poor devil! Your friend Worms received my half-confidences with pleasure. His penetration led him to guess the rest, and to guess even more than I thought; but he was restrained by a good-humoured scepticism, which he has perhaps got rid of since the capitulation.

Very soon Bazaine, whose relations with the Prussian head-quarters were becoming almost intimate and full of confidence, began to enter upon his Bonapartist intrigues. I had never had the intention of doing anything of a political nature; but now I had a fair chance in my favour, since Bazaine had not recognised the new Government of France. It was sufficient to hoist the flag of the French Government to overthrow the whole Imperialist set. Generals not disposed to countenance Bazaine in his intrigues were beginning to be mentioned, and amongst them the name of

General Clinchant, who had led a brigade of Zouaves in Mexico, and now commanded two fine regiments of 'Mexicans.' I went to see him, making use of his remembrance of you as my introduction. He soon became confiding, and told me how little certainty he had of being followed by his regiments on all occasions. It was necessary, in his opinion, to give an appearance of legality to the overthrow of the generals; and he saw two ways of accomplishing this: first, to organise secretly the elections (which were to take place on September 16th); and to have men he was sure of, and Changarnier in particular, named as representatives. This plan might not succeed; the men of the Liberal party in Metz, with whom I was closely connected, were neither men of character nor men of action. One alone, perhaps, had the necessary energy — Péchoutre, a shoemaker of the Rue Tête d'Or, an exile of 1851; but he had grown old, his party had been disorganised by twenty years of oppression, the labouring classes had no energy, and had lost all political capacity; he was but a solitary individual, who

felt sadly how weak our party was. As for the *bourgeoisie*, 'twas the *bourgeoisie:* worthy people, good fathers of families, good husbands, and good national guards; but who, if called upon for a manly resolution, would reply, as a last argument, 'After all, I am married, and have a family.' The other plan consisted in sending an emissary to Gambetta, to explain the state of affairs, and bring back full powers for General Changarnier, who was decidedly the head of the party — a head without much brain.

To send a man to Gambetta was a very hazardous, but, above all, a very slow proceeding; and I doubted if the strength of the army would hold out sufficiently long. At last, seeing that no one would make up his mind without the support of this shadow of legality, I accepted the offers of a young pupil of the Polytechnic School, who was entirely devoted to me, and was not yet bound to the service. But before exposing him to the risks of this adventure, I wished to make sure if the stakes were worth playing for, and went to see Changarnier.

I found in him an enlightened soldier, and one whom age had not deprived of a certain vigour. The marshals deceived him by appearing to listen to his advice, and letting him hope it would be followed; for his part, he always believed that they were going to fight. 'It is settled for the day after to-morrow,' he told me with a confidence I was far from sharing. He would not hear of taking the lead without a government order; his scruples were highly honourable, but I tried to prove to him that they were out of place. 'No,' said he, 'I will not usurp the command of an army in which I serve as a volunteer. I do not wish to dishonour my gray hairs.' When I left him, he took my hands and squeezed them. This took place about the 26th of September. On the morrow, we procured peasant's clothes, and passed several days in seeking a favourable starting-point for crossing the lines and getting rapidly into Luxembourg. The undertaking was really a difficult one. About this time my friend's father fell ill, and the plan for his departure was put off.

You know by the blockade of Paris how rarely

the Prussian lines have been crossed; let this serve as an excuse for our indecision. But I was getting impatient; I wished to obtain certain proofs of the treachery of our general. I went to call on my old comrade Albert Bazaine, the nephew and aide-de-camp of the general, and I found such duplicity in him, and such clumsy duplicity too, that I positively resolved to sacrifice my duty as a soldier to my duty as a citizen, and to attempt to cross the lines myself; which I did on the following day, dressed in the peasant's clothes which we had purchased for my friend of the Polytechnic School. But, either owing to ill luck or to want of skill, after several hours passed in walking in the rain and darkness, I was caught, by the light of a moon-ray, by the Prussian sentries, into whose midst I had fallen just as they were being relieved. I was taken to the advanced posts; the men were good-humoured fellows, who treated me gaily to some abominable black bread and a little brandy. The commanding officer, a young cadet, after rather a silly interrogatory in bad French, had me led to the guard-tent, whence

I was taken to the cantonment. I passed the night in the guard-house—after drying myself before a large fire, for I was shivering with cold, my poor clothes (the trousers only cost me tenpence) having been completely soaked by the rain —and in the morning I underwent a summary examination before a superior officer, the result of which was that I was taken for some unfortunate fellow driven out of Metz by hunger. I was then led back by three grenadiers as far as the last sentry, orders having been given to fire upon me if I looked round. The precipitated march of events prevented me from renewing this attempt, which I had made, I believe, on the 6th of October. The inaction of the army and the intrigues of the generals seemed likely to end in an early capitulation. Bazaine and Coffinières began to speak openly of the impossibility of resistance; this was nearly the most shameful moment of that shameful business. Before I made up my mind to undertake anything, and bring forward Changarnier's name, I had wished, as I have stated, to see the old general; but as I only found him resolved

upon one point, *i.e.* not to compromise himself, I should only have had him proposed if no other solution could be hit upon. Clinchant often sent me his aide-de-camp, Kremer, to see if no new plan had turned up. Uncertain and hesitating, he objected to taking any definite steps without the support of the population; and, on the other hand, the population would not move, unless the army took the lead. So it ended in nothing being done by anybody. But this is what happened to one of my comrades and to myself.

We were actively engaged in finding the means of action against Bazaine. One Saturday Boyenval went to see Changarnier, whilst I called upon two very intriguing generals of the Third Corps. They received me very well, and confided to me a whole mass of interesting things about Boyer's mission and other occurrences; but when I saw that they were disposed to treat with the Prussians, in order to be free to favour a political change in France, I broke off the interview rather abruptly, not wishing to have anything to do with people who were thinking of internal poli-

tics when the country was invaded. I believe those fellows (Changarnier was one of them, and Aymard was the most influential after him) were either Orleanists, or predisposed in favour of absolute power. My long interview with Aymard was very curious.

On the morrow, both my comrade and myself were denounced to Bazaine. I have since learnt, that that very day Changarnier had reopened relations with head-quarters. Bazaine sent for my comrade, who lost his temper, and confessed his patriotic attempts. He was then taken to a fort and shut up.

I arrived at head-quarters just as Boyenval was coming out with a superior officer: he appeared to be protesting rather sharply. I called to him; he merely said that the marshal wished to speak to me. I then perceived that his companion was a general officer. I afterwards learnt that that general had made him over to an officer of gendarmerie, who had at once taken him to Fort St. Quentin.

I was shown into the large study which is at

the bottom of the right-hand passage. It was well lighted up. With the general were present his two orderly officers (Mornay Soult and a tall cuirassier). The marshal is rather short than tall, and of an ordinary degree of stoutness. When he saw me in my yellow boots and military overcoat, he exclaimed with violence,

'What do you mean by that dress? What do you mean by that dress?' interrupted he when I tried to explain.

'I had not,' I answered, 'anticipated the honour of being admitted to your excellency's presence.'

He appeared suddenly to calm down. I was standing in the middle of the office, not far from the entrance, in military posture. The marshal was walking up and down, the two officers were leaning against the chimney. The marshal questioned me calmly, though perhaps with a slight tinge of irritation. I answered him with perfect self-possession, speaking very clearly, and at one moment I even perceived that the tone of my voice was much louder than it would have been in ordinary conversation.

I must here observe that the marshal, like his nephews, showed but little cleverness on this occasion. This may astonish those who are accustomed to attribute more than average cleverness to people in place. But it is sufficient to observe, that if the marshal had been a man of average capacity, or if he had been surrounded by capable men, we should not have been reduced to the condition we are in.

As for military science and the science of government, our rulers have not yet got beyond their A B C; there is, therefore, nothing astonishing that such should be the case where petty diplomacy and the police are concerned.

If I have secrets to hide, civilised society, especially in France, has means at hand, a fearful machinery, to tear them from me. Torture is abolished; but the first *canusot* you meet with is more capable of drawing out a man, and disposes of more redoubtable means, than the marshal in his study.

You expose to a direct interrogatory a man whom you wish to intimidate (the marshal did

not seek to intimidate me), or to gain over (he did not seek to gain me over), or a man you mean to put to death after speaking to him; but I left his head-quarters at liberty. I was not even followed.

'What do you go about the camp for?' Such was the marshal's first question — a sufficiently vague one for me to call for explanations before answering it. But the marshal did not wish to precise matters, and on his stating that there was nothing to precise, I replied that I sometimes took a walk outside the town, and that such had always been my habit.

'And what do you talk about when you are out walking?'

'I talk of all sorts of things: of the present condition of affairs, of what is going on about me.'

He wished for a more definite answer. It was really difficult, if not impossible, to give him one; for one hears and says so many things. I told him that it would take us until to-morrow to repeat them. 'Very well, then,' said the marshal; 'we will stay here until to-morrow.'

When I told him, however, that I spoke of the present condition of affairs, he chose to take it as a confession, and seemed rather pleased. As he pressed me upon the subject, though without precising, I told him that I did not give my thoughts to the present condition of affairs because it was the present condition of affairs, but only in the same manner as I had busied myself with the events which preceded it; that my interest in military science was not of recent date, and that an examination of my notes would easily convince him of the fact; that for years I had given my constant attention to the subject; that there was nothing clandestine in what I was doing. But I see that I am slightly inverting the order of the conversation.

The first tolerably clear question which the marshal put to me was with the object of learning if I had not called upon generals and other superior officers to talk over the present condition of affairs. I answered, that I had spoken to different officers.

'But you were not acquainted with them.'

'I have spoken on that subject with people whom I knew and people whom I did not know.'

'But you went to them on purpose.'

'On purpose for what, M. le Maréchal?'

It will be seen that my *interview* with the marshal was the result of some formal denunciation, which specified certain circumstances. I was indebted for this, as I at once saw, to the imprudent overtures, through which I had extracted from General Aymard the details of the projected capitulation.

I return to my interrogatory. 'On purpose for what?' I asked.

'On purpose to learn the intentions of those generals, and to find out what course they intended taking under certain circumstances.' And a moment afterwards, to be more precise, 'In the event,' he said, 'of a capitulation, of which, thank God, no one has as yet dreamt.'

I agreed respectfully to these last words by an approving nod. The marshal went up to the chimney-piece and leant against it. The officers were at the end of the room, near the desk. I

don't remember at all how the room was lighted up; but I remember perfectly that all the faces were in the full light.

The marshal persisted, and I went on defending myself.

'In your excellency's high position,' I continued, 'it is natural that you should receive a host of reports, with more or less truth in them, and which must be carefully examined before any faith is placed in them.'

I got the marshal to admit that he was bringing an *accusation* against me, and placed before him in a clear light the improbability of a mere captain's going about dictating to generals the course they should take. I submitted to him a very simple means of finding out if an officer wasted his time in culpable intrigues, namely, to examine how he did his work, and how he fulfilled all the duties of his rank.

The marshal having asked what *mission* I fulfilled in running about the camps, I answered, that I fulfilled no mission. What mission could I fulfil?

In the warmth of my defence, the conversation was taking a familiar turn, and I laughed at the improbability of a captain having a mission to gain over generals. I called for an inquiry, or at least for a confrontation. It could only be a misunderstanding, a mistake as to facts, which I claimed the right of discussing.

'Such an accusation,' said I, 'must be looked into in a different manner.'

'But,' said the marshal, 'there is no accusation.'

'I have only one wish, and that is to do my duty.'

'I have no doubt of it,' said the marshal. 'Come,' continued he, 'I am frank; I question you with frankness; answer me with an equal frankness.'

'That is what I have been trying to do since you have done me the honour of questioning me. Question me, and I place myself quite at your disposal, and will answer as clearly as possible.'

He agreed to this, and did not appear dissatisfied with my tone.

'Have you seen General Changarnier?' asked he.

'I have had the honour of seeing him once.'

'And what did you say to him?'

'Nothing worth repeating. I was very fortunate to be able to meet that eminent man, of whom I had often heard in my childhood.'

'I have not the honour,' said the marshal, 'to know General Changarnier; he has only been to see me once since I have been here.'

The marshal perhaps thought that I was one of Changarnier's men.

'And what was the object of your visit?'

Here I displayed some coyness about giving an answer, not finding it disagreeable to be solicited. I said I had no motive that I need hide; but such as it was, I would rather mention it in General Changarnier's presence than in his absence. At last, on being pressed by the marshal, I admitted that my visit had to do with a military memorandum which I had drawn up concerning the situation of the army ('a situation which has much changed since that time,' added I, shaking

my head), and which I had been assured the general would consent to patronise. I had, however, given up my idea; for the memorandum contained things that there was a difficulty about saying; it existed, however, and could be consulted.

'I do not mean to say,' I added, 'that my work is in a fit state to be placed before your excellency just as it stands; but I can assure you without hesitation, that it contains nothing to compromise me.'

'I am far from blaming you,' said the marshal, ending the conversation by a reticence.

I have omitted to mention that one of the first heads of the marshal's interrogatory which I had energetically forced him to drop, had been, that 'I had communicated to certain generals projects contrary to discipline, and had rendered it necessary for them to silence me.'

I took up those last words very sharply, telling the marshal that I had never placed any one in the position of silencing me. And as he returned to the same facts, I again stopped him by the firmness of my denial.

All this went on very quietly. I was respectful, as it was proper I should be, and the marshal very calm. It was a superior questioning an inferior on matters of service, indifferent at bottom to both of them. But when I told him that I only sought to do my duty, and he answered at once that he had no doubt of it, something strange and violent remained understood between us. I wish I could reproduce the convinced firmness of my tone in pronouncing those words; and I thought I could catch a shade of sadness in his.

At last, as I became more pressing, and the marshal less at his ease, as I demanded a discussion and an inquiry into the facts I was charged with; and as the marshal refused it, and only asked me to answer with a frankness equal to his own, he put the question to me for the last time: 'If I had been to general officers to induce them to act in a particular manner under certain circumstances?' I answered by a very clear denial, and waited for him to give me leave to go, which he did.

Once outside, I saw that night had fallen;

and fearing that the town-gates would be closed, I had one of the orderly officers called out to give me a pass. M. de Mornay Soult presented himself, and reëntered the office to write out the pass. He treated me all throughout with a politeness quite exceptional in men obliged at all hours to get rid of persons soliciting something.

I entered Metz freely. I went to dine at my ordinary, and from thence dropped in for a moment at the café, where I was looked upon, as it seemed to me, like a strange animal.

Boyenval not having reappeared, to avoid accidents I took the measures required by prudence.

I learnt, in fact, that the marshal had given orders to the generals and to the gendarmerie to take into custody, wherever they were found *in the camp*, two engineer officers who were going about spreading socialist doctrines in the army, and exciting a spirit of insubordination amongst the soldiers. This order left me in safety in the town, where my service was. I nevertheless kept hidden for two days, and redoubled my efforts to raise the town.

But the arrest of Boyenval had cooled down many people. When, after two days, I went disguised to Clinchant's camp, he would not see me, and his aide-de-camp Kremer, who received me, apprised me of the order of arrest, and of the general determination to undertake nothing. He did not, however, abandon the plan entirely; but he would have nothing to do with such compromising auxiliaries as ourselves, whom he had determined to replace by others who were incapable of compromising themselves.

My immediate chiefs had long looked upon me as dangerous; they did not refer to my momentary absence. My chief of Engineers, Salanson, who belonged to the Frossard set, went sometimes to Madame Cuvier's house, where I met him; and the chances of conversation often led me to express opinions very different from his own; hence a certain hostility, disguised under the appearances of cordiality. He knew that my colleagues and myself would play the devil to avoid the capitulation, and to carry things to extremities.

From the 18th to the 20th, finding myself

completely isolated, I gave no attention to politics; but, to get through the time, I passed a night at the outposts with a free company, who made war upon the Prussians often successfully. An enterprising and prudent lieutenant, who was versed in nocturnal warfare, led me with a strong patrol to within forty paces of the enemy's entrenchments, where several times, without loss, and almost without danger—thanks to the advantage he took of the inequalities of the ground—we were enabled to withstand a heavy fire. This is one of my pleasant remembrances, and I should have liked to have seen more service with those fine fellows.

Meanwhile my service continued. It consisted in having the drawbridge and gates of the town arranged. I repaired, and even threw up anew, almost all the earthworks of Saulay; and Colonel Petit said one day, as he was walking about there, that it was certainly the spot where the defensive works were most developed. All that was only for the benefit of the Prussians.

Towards the 27th, it appeared certain that the

capitulation would be signed. I had the consolation to learn that it had been negotiated by Changarnier at noon on the 28th. I found out by chance that a meeting of Engineer officers, to resist the capitulation, was being held at the café. A colonel—a most worthy man, sharp and intelligent, but incapable of a lasting resolution—stood up and spoke vigorously against the notion of a capitulation, and called upon all resolute men to combine. General Clinchant promised to take the command, if 20,000 men could be collected. The question once laid down, the deliberation grew confused; and I soon took the lead. On dividing the officers present according to their corps-d'armée, it was easy to perceive that but a very small portion of the army was represented. We agreed to give notice to as many people as possible, and that the following day Clinchant would see how many men had been got together. We were to write down our names in one of the rooms of the Engineer offices, which we used as a dining-room. Neither Clinchant, nor his aide-de-camp, nor the other *promoters* of the meeting of

the previous day were present, but only two pupils of the Polytechnic School, with Padovani and myself. The crowd was considerable. Many officers had their names set down, especially regimental officers. Some colonels had sent their adjutants-major; and many officers came to get information. Kremer put in an appearance in the morning, and promised that Clinchant would come at one o'clock and address the officers present. After breakfast the crowd was still greater than in the morning; but every one wanted to see Clinchant; for whom we waited in vain until 3 P.M. At this moment the same colonel of Engineers who had been so fiery the previous day appeared, looking dismal and discouraged. He was of opinion that resistance was impossible, and that there was nothing for it but to resign ourselves to circumstances. In the midst of the tumult which arose, certain officers began to deliberate on the possibility of resistance; but nothing could be agreed upon; and this attempt ended in smoke. The cannon and arms were being given up at the arsenal. The officers called for a big epaulette

to lead them; and the big epaulettes showed the white feather, as they have done so often.

In the evening I started off with my friend Padovani to find the free company I had been with some days before. We had rifles, ammunition, and provisions.

But the company was disbanded, and their arms given up. The most enterprising of the officers in command of it—my lieutenant of the former night—had pushed a reconnaissance as far as the Prussian vanguard, had conversed with the superior officer in command, and had become convinced of the impossibility of escaping without exchanging shots. We returned home; and the following day I resumed my gray overcoat and round hat. Some worthy country-folks—a husband and wife—took me to their village, at the limit of the French and Prussian lines, Châtel St. Germain, which was occupied by the Prussian 84th regiment. I aroused no suspicions amongst the numerous regiments of the enemy whom we met; and Sunday October 30th, after talking with some Prussians, and learning that commu-

nications were reopened, I put a blue blouse over my clothes, and set out for the north, through fearful rain and deep mud. I arrived at Luxembourg November 1st, at 7 P.M., without accidents, but not without difficulties. The following day I was at Brussels.

* * * * * *

The Tours Government.

Camp at Nevers, Feb. 1871.

MY DEAREST FATHER,

During my residence at Folkestone, a letter or report, published by M. de Valcourt under the direction of Gambetta, and in which my name was mentioned, caused me to write to Gambetta to explain clearly what my course of conduct had been. That course of conduct, which may appear singular to you when you consider the nature of a subordinate officer's duties, was dictated to me from the commencement by a positive conviction that our generals were completely ignorant of their duty, and that *it was necessary* to do everything to rescue the French army from their hands. I have staked my head upon this conviction as openly as possible.

Once out of Metz, I learnt more clearly what had been going on in the world: the siege of Paris,

the pretended Republican Government which had been constructed out of the fragments of 1848. I saw that Paris would not be intelligently defended; and as I advanced into France, things looked less and less encouraging. What struck me first of all was the disorder of our railroads: the trains constantly stopped owing to the disorganisation of the service; two days to send the London courier from Dieppe to Tours; on the central-station lines at Mézidon long strings of engines laid up with fires out; carriages piled up out of the line of circulation; in short, all the signs that this powerful instrument of war was lying useless in the hands of the Government. From Mans onwards the stations were full of officers and soldiers. What soldiers! and what officers! One felt inclined to rub one's eyes to make sure one was not dreaming. It is true that I had fallen into the middle of a strategic movement, which may serve to explain the disorder I witnessed. The sight was more and more saddening as you approached Tours. You could fully convince yourself of the incapacity of the Govern-

ment. At Tours the streets were full of queer uniforms: every one had lace on his hat, on his foraging-cap, and on his greatcoat. Undisciplined free-shooters strolled about the town. What were they doing there? One of my schoolfellows—a civil engineer, and Gambetta's secretary—introduced me to the minister on my arrival, or at least on the day of my arrival. He was ordered to present me without delay when I reached Tours.

Some officers who had arrived from Metz had spoken of me; and the minister on receiving me, 'all business being interrupted,' met me in a most flattering manner. When I had told him what I had done, and what I had desired to do, he asked me where I wished to be employed, and where I thought I should be useful. I answered simply, that I could be of use if they employed me in the organisation of armies and the direction of military movements—both of which subjects I had studied. The minister then gave me a letter to M. de Freycinet, who held the post of Delegate at the Ministry of War; and, armed with this letter,

I managed to obtain an audience of M. de Freycinet two days later, at the hour at which he received the public. Strange contrast! Just as much as Gambetta had treated me as a man of importance, just so much Freycinet treated me as a place-hunter. Both of them were mistaken; for I was neither a great personage nor a place-hunter. M. de Freycinet was a grave, grayish-haired, tired-looking man. 'Suppose,' said he, 'that the War Ministry had to be organised, what place would you choose?' The question was a strange one. I had asked for nobody's place; and, besides, I had never learnt anywhere what places a minister had in his gift. But I have already told you that M. de Freycinet treated me like a place-hunter.

I did not need a place to be made for me. I had one ready-made, since I was a captain of Engineers. I only wanted them to give me statements of position to make out, or maps to study. I therefore replied, after having digested the delegate's question a little, to see if it meant anything, 'That if all the places were to be distributed, I should choose the sole direction of operations.'

He made me repeat my impudent answer, and it was then his turn for reflection. I fancy the result of his reflection was, that he would never employ me.

This is what they did under the Republic of '70 with people they did not care to employ; they gave them a mission. 'I can't manage to learn,' said the delegate, 'what the position of the Army of the North is, and what forces are available in that region.' And he offered me, in sufficiently seductive language, a mission to the north, asking me at the same time what I could do there. 'That depends,' answered I. 'Shall I have powers and credit?' He let me know that I should have neither the one nor the other; and the mission ended by being a mission of 'study,' to inform him of what existed there, for he had not a single description of the condition of that army. It is true that Bourbaki had sent one in since he had entered upon his duties, but that solitary document had been lost in the ministerial offices. I shall tell you but little of that mission. I made the best of an essentially false position, knowing that

it was false, but not caring about that detail. Before starting I saw, for propriety's sake, General Véronique, who then constituted in his person the whole committee of the Engineers. He expressed to me his fear at seeing me accept functions which would place me in contact with officers of much higher standing and rank than myself, under exceptional conditions. I never liked the Committee, even when it honoured me with its favour; I therefore soothed General Véronique by assuring him that I should observe a due respect for my superiors. This amounted to a rupture with the Committee, the autocrat of the Engineers—a rupture that came all the easier to me, since I had long made up my mind for it, especially since the blockade of Metz. When I say rupture, I don't mean to say that they would not be delighted to see an ex-colonel of the auxiliary army reënter the sheepfold; what I mean is, that I shall never have anything to hope for from the committee. And what had I to hope for before the war, excepting to have my share of danger after the favourites, my share of

promotion after the favourites? . . . Poor favourites! they are in Pomerania.

I started for the north on the 18th of November, and remained there a fortnight. I there again met my three messmates of Metz, who had escaped from the Prussians after me, the last having passed out in a coffin beside a dead body. I gathered much information and many notes; I saw very varied prefects, and very uniform generals. The prefects were all lawyers, the generals all lay figures. After the first glance, I wrote to the delegate that there was nothing good there in the way of an army, and gave my reasons for thinking so. After spending some days at Lille, I went to Mézières, which they said was blockaded by the Prussians, without meeting a single Prussian. You can't imagine the effect produced by the ghost of a Prussian. When I returned to Lille, after four days' travelling, the army I had seen, or rather guessed at, had just got itself beaten at Amiens. I hurried to Arras, where I arrived with the fugitives; and towards the 3d or 4th of December I returned to Tours by the

aviso on service from Boulogne or Calais to Dieppe.

It was on my return that I learnt what a quaint jest those missions were. M. de Freycinet was always engaged, and always invisible. On being admitted at last with the place-hunters, I am received by the chief clerk.

'It is hardly worth while to give an account of your mission,' said he; 'the minister has no time to see to details. I have put all your letters on his desk' (I had given a daily account of my labours). 'He hasn't looked at them; see, they are still in this bundle.'

I undid the bundle; they were not there.

'It's strange,' said he. 'He must have read them, then.'

This encouraged me to leave a 'summary report' which I had prepared the previous night. Then I took my departure, resolved to await orders, and not to seek them again in the antechambers.

Meanwhile the fruit of the first affair of Orleans—a victory obtained by an error—had just

been lost; the French army was retreating, and, what was worse, operating an eccentric retreat. There was a double reaction against the ignorant strategists who had directed our movements: on the one hand, Gambetta's party, who would have wished to give that minister a more direct share in conducting hostilities, and to see him employ generals and officers of his own choosing, instead of doting generals and reactionary officers; on the other hand, the reactionary party, who were desirous of overthrowing Gambetta, by making him responsible for the defeats, and of taking us back to where we are now going. And meanwhile, what was Gambetta doing? I don't know: he was rather a flag than a chief—a flag which the Government hoisted to give itself a manly and republican appearance, and of which the men of action would have wished to make use, to be manly and republican. He was a sort of Louis XIII. without a Richelieu; he made and unmade prefects, whilst the fortunes of France were being staked upon loaded dice.

As I was sitting in the café on the evening

of December 6th, in came Cavalier, my senior at the Polytechnic, better known as Pipe en Bois—a journalist and an orator at public meetings, and for the moment Gambetta's secretary. Cavalier sat down with us, and, as a member of the Government, was not long in proving to us that everything was for the best in the army of the best of republics. He found me incredulous, grew animated, discussed, harangued, and swore; and finding that I was still incredulous, began at last to take what I said as serious; and this the more readily, that he knew that at that moment the armies of the best of republics were in rather a straggling condition—the one towards the east, another towards the west, and a third towards the south.

'When a man has ideas of that kind,' said he, after listening to what I had to say, 'he should communicate them to the minister.'

And on my replying that the minister was not accessible, he laid a bet that he would get me an interview with him that very evening. It was ten P.M., and we entered the ministry.

Here I am at the eleventh page of my letter, and I have skipped three-quarters of my adventures in telling them to you; but Destiny has played such fantastic tricks with me, and, in fact, with all of us, during the last few months, that nothing any longer astonishes me; and I narrate the romance of my wanderings as if it were the simplest tale in the world.

But it is when I have to speak of Gambetta that I feel most embarrassed. How am I to speak ill of the energetic tribune who was the first to proclaim the downfall of the Empire, and who, during six months of a desperate crisis, was the life and soul of our imbecile government? On the other hand, how am I to speak well of the undecided and ignorant minister, who was unacquainted with the condition and position of his armies, and whose barren and ill-directed activity could neither avoid disaster nor find remedies for its effects?

I sympathise with his vigour, with his aversion for bloodshed, with his rapid conception of facts, with his devotion to the Revolution; but I

detest his half-measures, his constantly-recurring acts of weakness, and his concessions to the men and to the things of the Empire.

I had got to the evening of December 6th. We entered the room which served Gambetta for an antechamber as it were, a room inaccessible to the public, and where the minister's private secretaries sat. They were dictating despatches, and talking and gossipping. Gambetta was close by in his study. Cavalier, and then Cendre, another of my seniors, begged him to grant me a hearing: he promised for the following day; but as in that country to-morrow means never, my comrades insisted all the more. Meanwhile the minister had come and established himself in an arm-chair in the large room where we were sitting. He was holding forth in his stentorian voice about the crimes of some sub-prefect or other; then seeing me at Cavalier's table, he came forward to wish me a good-evening.

'And what are you doing there?' said he, finding us poring over a map of France.

'We are making plans of campaigns, like the

rest of the world; you must have had more than enough of them.'

'Come and talk to me to-morrow,' concluded he.

But Cavalier couldn't make up his mind to let me go. He managed so well, that the minister called me into his study towards midnight, and kept me alone with him until nearly half-past two A.M., talking of war and army organisation. Knowing that I was speaking to an honest and energetic man, I did not hide the truth from him. He was specially taken by a system for combining the Mobile National Guards, the mobilised, and the troops of the line, something after the fashion of the half-brigades of 1794. He wished me to draw out the plan on the spot for the Army of the Loire; and then, being fearful of disorganising that army before the enemy, he offered me the command of the camp of St. Omer to try the experiment. But it did not suit me to remove so far from the spot where the decisive cast was to be thrown. He returned to the notion of amalgamating the Loire Army, so as to have but one

description of infantry. But this war-minister had neither statements of the condition nor of the exact position of the corps of his principal army; and I declined to interfere with the existing organisation without knowing exactly what I interfered with, and without having precise grounds to go upon.

Perhaps with a little quackery on my part, I might have obtained a firm hold of the minister's mind. I have sufficiently studied army organisation to be able to juggle with the numbers of battalions, and extemporise a system. But I had too much respect for the man with whom I was speaking, and for the interests involved. After a long conversation, during which Gambetta was really as amiable as a dictator could be to a poor devil, he fixed an hour on the morrow for studying the reorganisation of the army with me, with the aid of real positions and figures. The next day he did not receive me. Was it owing to mistrust, prejudice, or weakness? I can't say; but when I arrived, armed with a little sheet of tracing-paper, my comrade Cendre told me that

the minister was attending a council, which was not the case.

That evening I met at the café the same General Vergne, who had offered me the place of head Engineer officer in the camp he was about to take command of; and I accepted the place, partly out of pique. I arrived at Nevers on the 18th of December, after a sojourn at Bourges, which was not without its episodes; and I have set to work at forming Engineer companies. In spite of the heedlessness which prevented the troops from reaching this camp, I have collected one by one twenty officers and 500 men. The camp is now broken up, and peace is perhaps concluded; but I have been able to convince myself that my little troop, when acting on its own resources, is much more disciplined, capable, and serviceable than the battalions whence I drew it.

Peace is concluded, it is said. Then I am no longer a soldier. Before long I shall join you at Paris, and shall either go in for politics in France, or for industry in the United States; that depends

upon whether I am more or less disgusted with our wretched country.

Good-bye, my dear father.

Your affectionate son,

ROSSEL.

Letter to M. Gambetta.

December after Beaugency.

You were kind enough to receive me on my return from Metz, and to promise to employ me on the organisation and the movements of the armies.

I had hoped that the favourable reports you received of my conduct at Metz, and the goodwill I had displayed in the defence of the country, would have procured me an opportunity of discussing the direction of the present war with you, and of pointing out to you the mistakes in organisation and strategy which were being daily committed, and which were leading you to a defeat.

That defeat has been suffered. Served by the same staff, and surrounded by ignorant specialists, you are hurrying to a fresh disaster; and each failure gives the enemy a shred of our territory, destroys the last remnants of our military strength,

and this until you perish in defeat, and with you the hopes of our country and of liberty.

In the name of our common faith in that country and in that liberty, grant me a serious interview; give me the means of proving to you that I understand warfare, and of showing you the causes of your past defeats, and of the failures you are preparing for yourself. Is not the incapacity of your administrators and generals sufficiently demonstrated to justify you in seeking, without regard to seniority, the means of continuing the war with less misfortune?

ROSSEL.

The Camp at Nevers before March 18.

Camp at Nevers, Jan. 7, 1871.

MY DEAR KREMER,

No news from you since our adventurous meeting at the Café de la Ville at Tours. You were beginning to succeed; you have prospered since then, and, in fact, I have followed your example. The proverb is right, 'Il faut prendre du galon' (One should wear gold lace).* Don't you think with regret, when admiring your stars,† that if, three months ago, we had been in possession of those playthings, the Metz army would be carrying on operations in France? We were only wanting in gold lace.

The question of the national defence will perhaps one day be put, like the question of the de-

* 'Quand on prend du galon, l'on n'en saurait trop prendre:' a French proverb, meaning that when you do anything from interested motives, it is as well to get as much as you can for your trouble.

† Rank is indicated by the number of stars.

fence of Metz; if Paris falls, we shall see one of those pretty movements of general cowardice with which we are beginning to become familiar.* I don't know if your opinion of me is still the same; you used to consider me too adventurous. I should like to avoid all chances of peace, and I am engaged in communicating this impression to my friends, and in asking for their opinion.

Once Paris falls, the government you have seen at Tours, and which has already negotiated three or four armistices, will perhaps be disposed to negotiate a serious one, one of those armistices which are fatal to the vanquished, and which follow upon great disasters. What will you do then? I really don't know why I ask you, a

* In another letter from the camp at Nevers, date Jan. 7, 1871, and addressed by Rossel to his comrade Cendre, the following curious passage occurs:

'I have not given up my silly plan of predicting events, and I think, 1. that our approaching military undertaking will end in defeat, because it has been unmasked too soon, and is too negligently conducted; 2. that Paris will fall unless she has more than three months' provisions; 3. that *at the moment of the fall of Paris, there will be a crisis of social disorganisation, of which the reactionists and the cowards will avail themselves to swamp the national defence.*'

Lorrainer; I know perfectly well that you will continue the war. Write me a line on this subject, if only to tell me that your ideas have not changed since Metz and Tours.

You have in your neighbourhood one of my old comrades, Bourras, lieut.-col. of Engineers, who commands a corps of partisans. He is a sincere patriot and a true soldier. If you come across the 20th Corps, you will find in it our friend Padovani, with whom we used to work at Metz; he is still a captain of Engineers. Try to remove him, and give him troops to lead. You will rarely find a more daring fellow.

I am writing to you from Bois-Vert by Magny-Cours (Nièvre). I am head Engineer officer of the camp at Nevers. I have a little kernel of patriotic officers, to whom I give the mobilised to make soldiers of, or, better still, Engineers. This plan appears likely to succeed. We shall see afterwards if they will stand fire. With a good shake of the hand,

Yours sincerely,

ROSSEL.

Camp at Nevers—The Head Engineer Officer.

TO M. L——, LIEUTENANT COMMANDING THE 2D COMPANY OF ENGINEERS AT BOIS-VERT.

Meance, January 29, 1871.

THE rumour of an armistice for twenty-one days, and of elections for February 8th, is getting confirmed. Hold your company in readiness. Show no weakness to your men. Are you sure of them?

You must not think of building barracks and ovens, but of making soldiers, men, and citizens.

See to your non-commissioned officers, and give them explanations as to what you require.

See that your officers look after the men, find means to act upon them, and to make use of their authority.

I can't order firing until our armament is complete. How often have I mentioned these details to you! You have got three lazy fellows

for armourers. The arms must be ready in three days, or we shall fall out.

Buy grease for the shoes; I have got shoes for you.

Go into the huts on Wednesday, soldiers and officers! This is no time for shirking.

When I tell you to have belts made, it is because one hundred of your men are without them. Your workmen are a parcel of old women. Have less to do with carpentry.

If I were addressing you as an officer under my orders, I should have no right to ask for impossibilities. Are you here as a soldier, or as a patriot? If as a soldier, you are only fit to go to Germany with your three or four hundred thousand comrades. You are here as a patriot: I shall ask for impossibilities, and you will accomplish them. Try to get accustomed to the idea at once.

Your friend,

ROSSEL.

Notes taken at the Camp at Nevers.

MILITARY operations have been constantly unfortunate, owing to ignorance; the plans are always defective, and the chiefs incapable. Chanzy alone perhaps has shown any talent, and even he can only be judged when we know what forces were opposed to him; yet this general, who might have inspired confidence, was taken off the board, and engaged with insufficient forces in covering what? —Normandy, Bretagne, and Poitou.

Gambetta had rapidly become a politician; he should have become a soldier, and that was our hope when shut up in Metz; we had penetrated the nullity of our generals. Gambetta would not follow that course; he abdicated his power in favour of ignorant specialists, thinking perhaps that war has mysteries requiring profound study, or that you must have commenced as a soldier

to understand strategy. Yet in spite of this unfortunate determination, Gambetta has guessed much; a little study—very little indeed—would have taught him a hundred times more.

Instead of having a patriot at our head for the supreme business of the defence, we have obeyed reactionists of all colours; we have been headed by all the gouty old fogies on the list. They tore their hair with terror when they accepted the responsibility, and fell much more by their own impotence than by the skill of their adversaries.

All the operations have been defective—all!

The retaking of Orleans was the result of a childish error, classed and catalogued in all treatises on military art under the head of 'concentration on a point occupied by the enemy.'

The second taking of Orleans has also a name amongst grave errors. It is called a 'divergent retreat.'

The battle of Amiens may be called a 'passive defence,' as well as the operations which preceded the retaking of Orleans by the Prussians.

Bourbaki's march towards the East was blundered. The crime of jamming an army up against a neutral frontier, and uncovering the whole line of operation for a distance of one hundred miles, has no name in military science. If Gambetta had acted for himself, instead of trusting to the judgment of a worn-out old soldier, who only marched against his will, the fine operation he had planned would never have ended in a shameful disaster.

The Republic is as criminal in this respect as the Empire, for she has shown just as little intelligence in the choice of leaders. It is fair that the Bordeaux Government should recriminate against the Paris Government, but it is also fair that we should recriminate against the Bordeaux Government.

Shall I say to what extent our organisation has been defective, and to what fresh waste we have subjected the unfortunate inheritance of the Empire? We submitted to the distinction between the Army and the Mobile, but it is we who have invented the mobilised, multiplied uniforms and

systems, and excluded married men from the defence of the country, under the groundless pretext that to employ them would ruin the country. Is not the country sufficiently ruined now?

And what incapable organisers! Their one fear was, that there would be too many men to instruct; they excluded as many people as possible from the recruitment. They neither knew how to collect men, to command them, nor to instruct them. And the Government multiplied the work by unreasonably creating instruction camps, the folly of which I could never get understood.

Let us try now, however. The Government had a definite task to accomplish, with a definite period to accomplish it in, *i.e.* to instruct soldiers. It added to this difficult task that of creating simultaneously numerous camps. By creating new corps it rendered necessary the creation, by inexperienced administrators, of so many new dépôts; and by isolating the mobilised outside the towns, after having taken from them all the old soldiers, they deprived them of leaders and instructors.

The *artillery* would not sacrifice one nail of its scientific and durable *matériel*. Its cannons and carriages, its ammunition carriages and harness, will last forty years, it is true, but will only be ready when the war is over. As *haste* was necessary, did we simplify our armament? No; we complicated it by the adoption of the rifled cannon. Our defeats were not caused by defective weapons; they depended upon much higher causes. Rifled cannon are good for cockneys; let us have smooth-bores, and know how to work them.

The *cavalry* has proved as methodical as the artillery, and as incapable on the battle-field.

The Struggle to the Death.

THE defence until death, the continuance of the struggle until victory, is no longer a utopian idea, is not an error. France still possesses an immense war material and a large number of soldiers. The line of the Loire, which forms an excellent frontier, is hardly touched until Bourges is lost; but even if that town were in the hands of the enemy, an attack on the southern provinces is difficult, owing to the mountains of Auvergne, which would oblige the foe to divide his efforts between Lyons and Bordeaux. If the Prussians were checked on either of those lines, they would both be reopened.

As a general rule, a defence until death can never do harm to a people. The mistake we commit in concluding peace is the same as that which lost Carthage: a rich and rather sceptical nation is always tempted to commit that fault. The

victor has then nothing to do but to go on undermining it until ruin ensues.

Resistance, on the contrary, has often lucky chances. Remember the battle of Cannæ; the conquest of Holland by Louis XIV. at the head of the four most powerful armies in Europe, commanded by Turenne and Condé; the invasion of Spain by Napoleon in 1808. Those three situations were much more desperate and crushing, and left much fewer chances for a favourable issue, than our position after the fall of Paris. And yet all three led to a fortunate issue; nor is this the effect of chance, but rather of an enduring law, of which one of the distinctest characters is the wasting away of victorious armies.

An army carrying on an active warfare destroys itself, even with every facility for recruitment. The recruits which arrive keep up the numerical strength, but replace neither the old soldiers nor the officers it has lost. Napoleon's army perished through want of officers; the same was the case with Hannibal's army; the same will be the case with the Prussian army, and still

more rapidly, without considering the fact that the death of Bismarck or of Moltke may at once put an end to everything.

The saying of victorious Pyrrhus is not a paradox. There is a moment which often comes to conquerors when victory contains all the germs of disaster. Cannæ or the Moskowa represent that moment. Why should not the same thing happen to the Prussians? It is only a question of awaiting our opportunity—of wearing them out and wearying them. Let them find Capuas in our towns; but let us never come to terms with them for our ransom.

We are wanting in patience; we conclude peace as rashly as we went to war. The people are too changeable and too sceptic. Eighty years since they were capable of being roused to fanaticism by the notions of liberty, of equalitarian propaganda, of universal democracy. What will they believe in now?

ROSSEL.

A Letter to M. Gambetta.

February.

AT last you have ceased to be a minister—to be *my* minister. Without doubt you have been seized with disgust; or else you have grown weary of the powerless dictatorship you held; weary of all the little intellects which surrounded you, of all the petty ideas and petty anxieties which trammelled you.

Torn from the Government, where your energy was a standing reproach to every one, you are restored to the cause of the defence. No more ambitions to restrain or gratify; no more Bourbakis to humour; no balance to be maintained any longer between your men who were reactionists and your ideas which were revolutionary. The revolution must, perhaps, be entered upon afresh. If this terrible tenure of office has not exhausted you, I trust that we shall undertake it.

You are wanting in military understanding;

that defect has proved your destruction. The decision and boldness with which you overflow are shamefully wanting in our generals; and yet those are the true gifts of military men.

For my part, I could never understand what you were doing in your study. When I think that a few hours a week sufficed for Napoleon to get through the routine work to which you were reduced, I side with the despot against you. He made war, and you let others make it. Your government has not proved a fighting government; it was too like the preceding one — a quantity of offices and a little police.

Never mind; you are no longer the government. You are still the most determined and the most intelligent man our party have given birth to. For our sakes I bitterly regretted to see you abdicate, or rather to see you little by little eliminated from power. But the sympathy, mingled with pity, which I felt for your government leads me to excuse that fault; and I heartily desire to assist you in exerting your influence in the councils which are about to be opened.

My illusions, and the hopes which I had built upon you, date from the September Revolution. Your young renown made me confident that you would overcome the impotence of your decrepit surroundings. I saw how readily you had become a politician, and I flattered myself that you would become a military man with equal rapidity. You never even tried; chance made you acquainted with some of the secrets of our profession, but their general meaning escaped you, and you placed yourself willingly in the hands of our imbecile generals. Can I not assist you? More than once . . .

The 19th of March.

To the Minister of War at Versailles.

Camp at Nevers, March 19, 1871.

Mon General,

I have the honour to inform you that I am about to proceed to Paris, to place myself at the disposal of the Government forces which are about to be organised there. Having learnt by a Versailles despatch, published this day, that two parties are struggling for mastery in the country, *I do not hesitate in joining the side which has not concluded peace, and which does not include in its ranks generals guilty of capitulation.*

Whilst taking so grave and so painful a resolution, I regret to have to suspend the duties of the Engineer service of the camp at Nevers, which had been confided to me by the Government of the 4th of September. I make over that

service, which no longer consists in anything but the regulation of articles of expenditure, and transfer the accounts to M. F., lieutenant of Auxiliary Engineers, a man of honour and experience, who remained under my orders by General Vergné's command, in virtue of your despatch of the 5th instant. By means of a letter addressed to the Store Department, I give you a summary account of the position of the service.

I have the honour to be, mon Général,

Your most obedient humble servant,

L. ROSSEL.

The Part I played under the Commune— Cluseret, Delescluze, &c.

Versailles Prison, June 20-24, 1871.

BEFORE the 18th of March I had considered what course I should take in the event of an insurrection in Paris. The condemnation to death of several men of the democratic party for a movement which took place during the siege, and the suppression of several newspapers, had increased my feelings of hostility towards those vanquished men who showed themselves so incapable and so humble before the enemy, and so bold and insolent when they had to do with political parties.

The journals had made out a list of the artillery existing in Paris; I had especially remarked more than 600 field-pieces. Small-arms and ammunition were in still greater abundance. If one knew how to make use of those enormous stores, it was possible to snatch back victory. I

wrote in this sense to an intelligent man who had taken an active part in the popular movements at Paris since the beginning of the war. He answered by furnishing me with precise statements; but the general impression produced by his reply, was the incapacity and want of organisation of the party of action, and the impossibility of a movement. His opinion on this point was final and well supported. Nevertheless, the existence of sufficient war material for a struggle, and the presence of a party disposed for it, seduced me in spite of everything.

I did not foresee the possibility of a civil war which would go beyond street-fighting.

On the 19th of March a despatch from M. Thiers, officially posted at Nevers, announced the evacuation of Paris by 40,000 troops in good order. Even had I not been favourable to the Revolution, this last detail would have made me side with the insurrection. The army had not undergone sufficient shame during the war; it was necessary that 40,000 men should leave Paris without fighting, without a day's struggle, in the

presence of so contemptible a foe as an insurrection must always be; and that too after having had the advantage of the offensive, which is the only really favourable chance for an insurrectionary movement.

That evening at dinner my host, M. de L., guessing that I had made up my mind, entered upon a conversation, in which he endeavoured discreetly and with the most friendly sentiments to dissuade me from the extreme course I contemplated. If he remembers that interview, his testimony may be useful to me. What he said touched and saddened, without convincing me. I showed him that, taken as a whole, this Revolution had been made by the people—by those who suffer by the present condition of society; that the crimes and errors which stained the Revolution should not prevent men of honesty and instruction from joining their party at such a critical moment. In short, my departure was rather a sacrifice than anything else; and amidst the disaster and feebleness of the whole country, the Parisian revolutionary party was, in my eyes, the lesser evil.

I learnt the same evening the murder of Generals Thomas and Lecomte. Such occurrences are almost unavoidable in revolutions.

I left Nevers at night, and arrived at Paris on the morning of the 20th.

On the first bill I read I saw the names of Sullier and Assi. This is what caused my first sensation of disgust and disappointment.

I inquired where the Government sat, and went to the Hôtel de Ville to have my name put down and ask for service.

On the 22d of March I was presented by some friends to the Committee of the 17th district; and the same day I was named by the Central Committee of the Hôtel de Ville, and elected by the Committee of the 17th arrondissement, chief of the 17th legion.

The first days of my command were occupied in taking measures against the reactionary movement, which was being got up under the orders of Admiral Saisset, and one of whose head-quarters was at the St. Lazare terminus, close to my district. Prisoners were brought in, who were

generally arrested in the trains starting for Versailles. Much animosity was shown towards them, and I took every pains to protect them, being naturally averse to all the violence for which revolutions are a pretext, and determined, whatever the consequence, not to permit any. I caused those who were detained, to be treated with humanity; and I delivered as many as I could, accompanying them myself beyond the dissatisfied crowds. Those people must feel some gratitude to me, as they thought themselves very near being shot.

Admiral Saisset's retreat put an end to the hopes of the reaction. The elections for the Commune, directed by the care and authority of the Federation of the National Guard, took place almost immediately (March 26th).

I don't know if the Federation made the Revolution of March 18th; but what is certain is, that it had confiscated that Revolution, and excluded from all part in affairs the truest republicans and the most active members of the International Society, if they did not belong to the

Federation. It is owing to this fact that disputes arose from the very commencement between the mayors and their *adjoints*, although both republican and revolutionary, of certain districts, and the battalion delegates who formed the Legionary Council or District Committee. These last confiscated the municipal authority in the name of the Federation, and exercised it without sagacity, and sometimes without honesty. This is what took place in the 18th district, and in the 17th, where I was.

When this dispute was settled, fresh ones arose between the delegates of the Central Committee of the Federation and the District Committee concerning the elections.

After the elections, it would have seemed that everything should revert to the Commune. But nothing of the sort: the same struggles continued between the Communal delegates and the District Committee (or Legionary Council).

As chief of the armed force, I was constantly called upon to take part in these dissensions; and I did not spare the District Committee, which was

certainly the most idiotic little piece of despotic machinery that can be imagined. Finally, when the municipality sent by the Commune wished to establish itself, it was my duty to arrest the most autocratic of those demagogues.

Whilst those quarrels were going on, I was engaged in gaining over to the cause of the Revolution the 33d and 90th battalions. I succeeded without violence and without accidents. I also turned my attention to the battalions in the outskirts near my district, from St. Omer to Suresnes. The Revolution, after Admiral Saisset's departure, had some days of real progress; and I got so far as to be able to count seventeen battalions in my district, instead of seven, which it numbered when I arrived. Some detachments of the army, left without chiefs, came over to the Federation; and I ordered elections, which led to good results.

The Central Committee, during its short tenure of office, had forbidden the reëlection of the whole staff of the federated battalions. This order became a real stumbling-block in the way of their properly-organised command. The elections were

carried on in a most unenlightened spirit; the convocations were impeded by the military service, with which the battalions overloaded themselves, as if for their amusement. It was constantly necessary to renew the elections, which had been incomplete, irregular, or without results; and the end of it all was, that with great difficulty, and after an infinite number of changes, chiefs were elected who had neither influence, instruction, nor dignity. The staff was constantly changing, and the elections recurring, until the fall of the Commune, or close to that period.

Thus ended the month of March. The delegates of the Commune at the mayoralty of my district were Malon, Gérardin, and Varlin. They considered me capable of rendering important military services to the cause of the Revolution, and tried to get me into the Council, where military questions were decided.

About this time the first engagement of the civil war took place within my district. A reconnoitering party, composed of two squadrons of cavalry, drove a detachment of a suburban bat-

talion from the cross-roads of Courbevoie, and a National Guard was sabred by an officer. This reconnaissance was pushed as far as the bridge at Neuilly, but fell back on seeing the resolute attitude of another suburban detachment who occupied the *tête de pont.*

The following day I sent out a strong detachment, which occupied without resistance the cross-roads evacuated the day before; but it returned in disorder a few hours later, having been abandoned by its chiefs.

The next day the enemy returned with cannon, placed a battery at the cross-roads, and cannonaded the Neuilly bridge, which was abandoned. The shells reached the ramparts. This was probably the 1st of April. I made a plan for crossing the Seine at the bridge at Asnières the following night, to go and retake Courbevoie and the bridge of Neuilly by the line of the railroad. This would have been a very serviceable movement, and well timed up to the 15th of April, but the bad quality of the troops prevented it from ever succeeding.

On the 1st of April, as well as I can remem-

ber, I was summoned with the other chiefs of legions to a council of war at the Place Vendôme staff-quarters. It was probably there that the march on Versailles, which cost Flourens his life, was decided upon. I remained there about two hours; but seeing that nothing of importance was being said, I went away, after having obtained authority to carry out my projected attempt upon Courbevoie.

This attempt ended in a most thorough failure, perhaps on account of the defects in the plan itself, but principally on account of the bad quality of the troops and officers. I started with seven battalions, numbering altogether about 2000 men, divided into three groups, under the orders of Malon, the member of the Commune, of my second in command, and of Gérardin, another member of the Commune. At least two battalions were completely drunk, and others complained of not having eaten. The vanguard, which I led, followed me in good order; but the other battalions, whose officers had no influence over their men, were not long in sitting down on the

side of the road, quarrelling and complaining. Two or three panics took place — in short, the most thorough disorder. The officers failed entirely in doing their duty. Malon and Gérardin exerted themselves, whilst for my part I did all I could to achieve something; until at last, convinced of the impossibility of leading such people against an enemy, we resolved to take them back to the town. But if it had been impossible to make them advance, it was still more painful to make them return. I passed a cruel night, and I thought it would disgust me for ever of such undertakings and such soldiers.

I had been followed the whole night through, without my knowledge, by some of those jealous republicans who consider it their first duty to exercise a rigorous control over the actions of men in office. The result of this supervision was perfectly favourable to me, and the opinion they formed of my character, joined to the opinion of Malon and Gérardin, caused me to be chosen to serve in the Ministry of War. I was very near being shot at the bridge of Asnières by my Na-

tional Guards. On reëntering the mayoralty, my first thought was to impose a rigorous discipline upon the legion, and to make a selection amongst the officers, so as to exclude those who were incapable of commanding; but the first step I took towards this end awoke the susceptibilities of the District Committee, who arrested me, and three delegates took me quietly to the Préfecture of Police, where I was at once locked up. This took place on the 2d of April, about seven A.M.

I was broken down with fatigue, and deeply disgusted with the Revolution and the revolutionists, with the National Guard as a body, and the National Guards as individuals. I fell asleep immediately, and was awakened at eleven o'clock by the warder, who came to let me out as hurriedly as I had been put in. An officer who was quite unknown to me had ordered my release.

I returned home, thinking only of leaving Paris, and I slept all day, to set myself up after ten days of constant fatigue. But the following day (April 3d), the same officer who had caused me to be set at liberty the day before, having

learnt my address in the office of the 17th district, arrived with a letter from Cluseret, begging me to be the head of his staff at the War Department.

This is what had taken place. The military authority, which had been confided to Eudes at the end of the Government of the Central Committee, had afterwards been divided between Eudes, Bergeret, and Duval. On the 1st of April those three generals had planned, in the council of war of which I have spoken, a march upon Versailles, which took place at the same time as my luckless movement upon the bridge at Asnières. The results are known—the death of the unfortunate Flourens and of Duval, and above all a large number taken prisoners. The very day of this scrimmage, the trio, Eudes, Bergeret, and Duval, were set aside, and the command confided to Cluseret. I have been told that my appointment was forced upon him by the War Commission, through the influence of the members for the 17th district; for at bottom he always seemed to entertain a certain jealousy of me, which was

mitigated by the feeling that I was necessary to him. However that may be, the letter in which he summoned me was very friendly in tone. They had been looking for me for twenty-four hours, and they had searched all the Paris prisons to find me.

I obeyed the call at once, in spite of my repugnance for staff duties and my previous disappointments. I had hope in the Revolution, and besides, I did not think it becoming to refuse.

From that time forward I was constantly tied down and engaged in such a multiplicity of incoherent affairs, that it will be nearly impossible for me to remember the principal ones, and, above all, to put the dates aright.

The greater part of my time, when I was chief of Cluseret's staff, was certainly taken up by importunate and useless individuals; delegates of every origin, inquirers after information, inventors, and, above all, officers and guards, who left their posts to come and complain of their chiefs, or of their weapons, or of the want of provisions and ammunition. There were also almost every-

where independent chiefs, who did not accept or did not carry out orders. Each district had a committee as useless, as quarrelsome, and as jealous as that of the 17th. The artillery was sequestered by an analogous committee, also dependent upon the Federation, and who formed a rare collection of incapables. Every monument, every barrack, every guard-house, had a military commandant; that military commandant had his staff, and often his permanent guard. All those spontaneous productions of the Revolution had no other title or rule than that of their own pleasure, the right of the first comer, and the calm pretension to retain the place without doing anything. You might see doctors promenading with a general's gold lace and escort; barrack doorkeepers equipped like superior officers; and all those fellows had horses, rations, and money.

To make up for this, the National Guard was often without chiefs. The former officers were no longer obeyed, because of the orders for reëlection. The rank of the new set was either disputed or they were not elected; this served the

battalions as a pretext for not marching. The elections of the chiefs of battalions were very long; those of the chiefs of legions impossible. An officer was no sooner elected than protests against his election, and accusations against his character and opinions, poured into the ministerial offices, from the committees of the Federation, of the Commune, and of all imaginable authorities. It was no child's-play to make something out of all that, to say nothing of the serious defects in the organisation of the National Guard, the legacies of preceding governments, which would alone have sufficed to render abortive all our attempts at organisation and defence. Our National Guards had been carefully formed by despotism and for despotism; it was impossible for us to make anything of them by liberty and for liberty; the transition was too sudden, the necessity too imperious, and the events too hurried.

The staff of the War Department consisted, at the beginning, of Cluseret and myself, with two or three idlers in Cluseret's suite. I made up the necessary numbers by taking a few men of some

instruction who offered their services, and I gave my attention specially to the organisation of the legions. The very first days it was necessary to oust Bergeret, who was commandant of the city, and would have wished to command everything. Cluseret had to have him arrested, and replaced him by Dombrowski, whose appointment I supported, and who was backed by Félix Pyat. It was agreed that Dombrowski should direct the movements of the troops and the military operations, whilst we organised the legions and saw to the administration. Several things prevented this idea from being carried into effect. In the first place, Dombrowski established himself at Neuilly, and paid no attention to the left bank; on the other hand, Cluseret proved himself almost immediately inferior to his duties, in activity, in the power of taking the lead, and in capacity for organisation. The directions he gave were ill-conceived; he did not indicate the means of carrying them out, and, worst of all, he did not stick to his plan once he had adopted it; his fickleness and his uncertainty were great causes of difficulties.

He began by twice modifying the organisation of marching companies, reëstablished by his predecessors; then he raised the daily pay of the artillerymen to three francs. Both these measures had unfortunate results. Other innovations he introduced also augmented the disorder. The complication of the government machinery became extreme. There was a commission specially charged with looking after Cluseret, of which Delescluze and Félix Pyat were the most active members. This commission 'bothered' Cluseret, to use the truest word, and that was all they were good for. They transmitted to us by telegraph, frivolous notices or ridiculous questions, or sent us with special recommendations, pitiful inventors or drunken delegates. The commission, as a body, often conveyed itself to the ministry, and dawdled about Cluseret's study with a most business-like air.

The organisation of the Military Court stands out alone in this chaos of remembrances. It sat for the first time on the 14th and 15th of April. This jurisdiction was constituted by the Com-

mune, at the pressing instance of Cluseret. Wild acts of indiscipline and rebellion were daily committed with impunity; it was necessary to have recourse to energetic measures of coercion. I was named president of that court, and filled those functions for about a week. That period is especially important with regard to the part I played.

In the first place, the necessity of attending the sittings of the Military Court prevented me from seeing myself to the condition of the legions, which was beginning to be more regular, and to which I attended in the morning. The sittings of the Military Court were held at night, and lasted pretty late, and on getting home I had still business to settle. I was therefore forced to confide the morning report to an officer in whom I had but little confidence, and who gave to this work of organisation, which was of capital importance, a bad direction, and perhaps one which he intentionally made injurious to the success of the Revolution.

Besides which, the power with which these

functions invested me, aroused the susceptibilities of the Commune, an assembly as suspicious and timid as ever democratic assembly was.

Last of all, it was just at this moment that Cluseret manifested more and more clearly his intention of setting me aside in the conduct of affairs, whilst still continuing to employ me, and detaining me near him, to prevent me from being elsewhere. It is known that the service of the chief of the staff comprises the details of all the services, and that he is the necessary medium for transmitting his superior's orders. Cluseret, on the contrary, began to conduct the principal branches of the service directly, and thus placed me in a very false position, as I was charged with the execution, explanation, and completion of orders with which I was unacquainted. I have since supposed that at that period Cluseret, whose undecided mind was subject to the wildest delusions, had his reasons for keeping me in the dark as to the steps he took, and for suppressing the involuntary control which a chief of the staff exercises over his general. He nevertheless con-

tinued to treat me with courtesy; and he spared me no praises as to the price he attached to my services.

I return to the question of the Military Court, a question which I shall treat more thoroughly perhaps, and separately, if necessary.

To accept the presidency of that court was the greatest sacrifice that I made, and could make, to the Revolution. An enemy to revolutions, circumstances had thrown me into a revolution. Whilst hating civil war, I was engaged in civil war. I was now called upon to preside at a revolutionary tribunal, a tribunal which would only pass sentences of death.

If it be necessary for me to defend myself against the charge of ambition, my painful acceptance of this office is perhaps the strongest argument I can adduce. What interest can an ambitious man have in soiling his hands? I must have been very foolishly ambitious, or very ignorant, to stain my name with blood in subordinate functions. There is only one reasonable explanation for my conduct, which was that I was sacrificing

myself to the Revolution. I had chosen none of the posts which I had filled in succession, nor had I refused to accept any post. In such moments of crisis one must display a sectarian devotion. I therefore accepted the presidency of a tribunal which I was of opinion would only return sentences of death, and only thought of fulfilling my duties in the manner most serviceable to the revolutionary cause. In the same measure as the military situation grew more pressing, the indiscipline and want of organisation of the troops became more manifest. It would be out of place to enter into full details with regard to that situation; it is sufficient to state that success was hopeless as long as the troops showed no obedience, and could shirk their military duties with impunity. We had abstained from giving a proper organisation to the National Guard, which would have been the best remedy; it now remained to be seen what could be done by repression, and it was necessary that it should be prompt and real.

Such was the object for which the Military

Court was constituted; its action was limited by the clause of the decree which enjoined that no execution should take place until the approval of the Executive Commission, which was the executive power of the Commune, had been obtained. In its first sitting the court issued an order regulating the mode of procedure and the nature of its punishments. That order was necessary to complete the far from precise decree of the Commune; it simplified the forms of procedure, and assured to the accused the safeguards of publicity and of defence; as for the punishments, it simply laid down that the court should follow existing laws and the rules of martial jurisprudence. All the following orders were issued without bearing upon any text of the law. All the accused were federals charged with military crimes or offences. The court neither judged political cases nor cases of common law.

The following day a chief of battalion, guilty of having refused to march against the enemy, was condemned to death. The Executive Commission commuted the punishment, at his de-

fender's request, to imprisonment until the end of the war.

The decision of the Executive Commission which commuted this first sentence enervated the Military Court. It judged three or four more affairs, of which the two most important were, the abandonment of a trench near the fort of Vanves by a battalion from the 5th district, whose officers were condemned to suffer various penalties; and the affair of the 105th battalion, which brought before the court a dozen or so officers and guards who had refused to march against the enemy, and who were guilty of mutiny and assault upon a superior in the service. This affair led to no sentence of death; there were different condemnations, and some acquittals, but no very serious consequences.

The action of the Military Court made the Commune anxious; it feared this new power, which condemned the guilty without regard to their antecedents, as more or less distinguished demagogues. It so happened, in fact, that our most undoubted offenders were firm upholders of

the good cause. The commandant we had condemned to death was a revolutionary veteran; and the 105th battalion, which we had abused, was the pillar of the Federation in the 7th district. The Commune showed by the decree that its members were only amenable to itself—that it feared their being amenable to others. It considered as an enemy a jurisdiction which condemned, without distinction of persons, those who would not go under fire, or came out from under fire when they pleased.

I have said that the 105th battalion belonged to the 7th district, which is the Faubourg St. Germain, and which stretches along the banks of the Seine towards the Champ de Mars. The Federals were few in that quarter, but the 105th was recruited at the extreme end of the district. It *federated* itself in part from the commencement, then proceeded to hold fresh elections, and was the support of the revolutionary organisation in that part of the town. The members of the Commune there elected (Parisel and Urbain) owed much to the 105th. To strike at that

battalion was equivalent to attacking the validity of their election and the support of their power. They referred the judgment of the Military Court to the Commune, and the judgment was quashed by a decree, one of the statements in which was personally offensive to me.

My father, who lived in Avenue Latour Maubourg, had commanded that battalion at the period of the 4th of September; he had resigned towards the end of the siege; his successor had left Paris after the 18th of March; and the actual commandant, a certain Witt, was implicated in the affair, and acquitted. The Commune decided that my *relationship* with the 105th was sufficient to invalidate the judgment; and without going to the bottom of the affair, which, had they done, the sentence would have appeared manifestly equitable and moderate, it quashed the judgment. The decree had been made out by Léo Meillet.

The order had been issued on the night of the 22d April; it was quashed on the 25th or 26th. I learnt it by the *Officiel*, and at once

resigned my posts as president of the Military Court and as chief of the staff to Cluseret.

For the second time my good fortune offered me an easy opportunity and good and valid reasons for abandoning, for detesting, that disjointed Revolution — my bad fortune carried the day.

I must go back a little, to speak of the events which led to Cluseret's arrest, and of that which followed it.

Cluseret, after having shown, during the first moments of his tenure of the ministry, an excessive activity, had been completely mastered by the course of events. Some attempts he had made to shake off the Commune had made him neglect his daily business still more; he had come out from those struggles vanquished and lowered. Pyat and Delescluze, who were then the most active members of the Executive Commission, tormented him by their supervision, their questions, and their childish anxieties. On the other hand, he neither enjoyed my sympathy nor (so far as capacity went) the confidence of the

officers employed at the ministry. I have said that his character was undecided, and his mind open to the grossest errors. I could bring forward facts, which would show that between him and me there was more than the germs of dissension. When I was named, on Cluseret's proposal, to the presidency of the Military Court, I was obliged to leave, as I have already noticed, the duty of making out the reports to an officer not wanting in special knowledge, but whose character inspired me with no confidence whatsoever. That officer availed himself of the opportunity to obtain from Cluseret, who had, however, been forewarned by me, the exclusive care of the organisation of the legions; he conferred numerous appointments, and surrounded himself by a complete staff, and sent in daily reports to Cluseret of a very summary nature, and quite insufficient for ordering the service. By these and other means he had arranged for himself completely independent duties. This may appear strange, but the whole truth was still stranger; for such attempts at *autonomy* amongst the lowest

officials, far from being exceptional, recurred daily everywhere. After Cluseret had tolerated several of them, I offered him my resignation for the first time, grounded upon the repugnance which the despotic and unintelligent policy of the Commune inspired me with. Shortly afterwards I offered it to him again with sufficient persistence for him to accept it; but he begged me, at the same time, to continue in the exercise of my duties until he could find me a successor. At last, after the decree of the Commune quashing the order of the Military Court, I ceased all service on the 27th of April.

Men are soon worn out in revolutionary periods. After a month of power, and, above all, of struggling, Cluseret was completely worn out — exhausted, in spite of the concessions of every kind which he had constantly made to every one. At first he had wished to be that which the military chief in a besieged place, in an army, in a camp, should be; that is to say, an absolute, undisputed, and uncontrolled chief. He had completely failed with the Commune, and had erred

in retaining the command after that check. He had at first undergone the assiduous control of the Executive Commission, chiefly represented by Pyat and Delescluze; then one of the numerous *Palace* revolutions which occurred in the Commune caused the Executive Commission to be composed of all the delegates to the different ministries, and a special War Commission to be named, to look after Cluseret in the discharge of his duties. Suspicions were accumulating against him, and several times already the question of his arrest had been raised.

Such was the situation of affairs when I ceased to be at the head of the staff for carrying on the war. My resignation pained such of the sincere revolutionists as knew me. Gérardin, who from the commencement had despised the Byzantine discussions of the Commune—Gérardin, who, on account of his continual presence at the advanced posts, had a much clearer idea of the falseness of the situation than the folks at the Hôtel de Ville—confided to me a plan which he had conceived for nullifying the Commune, by

having the power transferred to the hands of a Committee of Public Safety, or some other Executive Committee, composed of young and resolute members of the Commune, whom he named, and in which I should share with Dombrowski the conduct of military operations. In the mean time the members of the War Commission chose me for the confidant of their anxieties; and even systematic Republicans, who had not participated in the proceedings of the Commune, offered me spontaneously their systems and their support. I thus found myself the centre of an incoherent and varied movement, whose unconscious watchword was to 'save the Revolution by annulling the Commune.'

I let things take their course. I was as much the enemy of the Commune as the sensible Republicans were; yet I still thought that the Commune could and ought to be beneficial. Through Gérardin I was sure of the support of the energetic and intelligent members of the Commune; others, whom I refrain from naming, because they have not appeared on the revolutionary scene,

offered their financial experience; and finally the generals obeyed me willingly. Under such circumstances success was not impossible, and the Revolution might save the country.

On the evening of the 29th I was summoned before the Executive Commission. It was not concealed from me that they would have no more to do with Cluseret, and they put to me several questions on the situation and on my own ideas. I stated my opinion of the situation, which was becoming more and more involved. The defence was a mere nothing, and the attack being independent of the plans of the enemy's generals, and solely dependent on the talent of the subordinate officers of Engineers and the courage of the rank and file opposed to us, would necessarily make continuous progress until the town fell. There was no hope of success, save in a sweeping reform in the system of salary (which, as at present organised, placed the people, combatants and non-combatants, in the pay of the Commune); in the reëstablishment of discipline by means of severe examples, made chiefly amongst officers of high

rank; finally, in the immediate organisation of a small *corps d'armée*, capable of acting in the open country and of taking the offensive. When I left, my appointment as provisional War-delegate was signed by the Commission; it was announced to me the following day, at the same time that Cluseret was arrested at the Commune. I must here observe that I defended Cluseret against the press and the Commune, from the vulgar accusation of treason.

This change was the result of the efforts of the War Commission, whose duty being to divide the management of war business with Cluseret, and who, considering that Cluseret neither did nor chose to do anything—which was true enough—had sought a successor for him, and had made me acceptable to the Executive Commission. Both the Commissions promised me their full support, which consisted in good sentiments on the part of the Executive and good-will on the part of the War Commission. But neither the one nor the other had broad ideas enough, nor sufficient capacity, nor aptness for such excep-

tional and revolutionary work as that which presented itself to us.

Simultaneously with this change, the idea of which Gérardin had spoken to me, had been carried into execution by the overthrow of the Executive Commission, and the creation of a Committee of Public Safety, which was elected May 1st, with the difference that in this Committee, instead of resolute and intelligent men, Gérardin was associated with the pitiful Félix Pyat, with Léo Meillet, and two other stopgaps whose names I don't remember. This *fiasco* deprived me of the support of the Executive Commission, and placed on a pinnacle Félix Pyat, whose blundering activity would have rendered any undertaking abortive, and whose brain—devoid of judgment—was the receptacle of all the impure and unwholesome ideas that ferment in a revolution. I learnt this news by an avalanche of despatches which fell upon the War Department during the night of the 1st of May, and by which he disarranged all the military measures I had taken.

As soon as I reëntered the Department on

the evening of April 30th, I set to work at the most urgent measures. It is not a matter of indifference to state, that during the night of the 29th a trench situated to the right of Fort Issy had been surprised by the enemy with the battery which held it. Mégy, the incapable commander of the fort, seeing the enemy stretching out on his right, had taken fright, and evacuated the fort with the garrison. Cluseret, at this news, had started for Issy, and, collecting some troops, had led them back to the fort, which he had been the first to enter. It was on his return from this expedition that the Commission had had him arrested. For my part, I confined Mégy, and sent General Eudes to Issy, the importance of which position he did not understand, and he therefore proceeded thither much against his will.

I have said that the most pressing questions were the pay, discipline, and the organisation of active forces.

It was indeed a pressing matter to put an end to the crying abuses which obtained under the existing system of payments. I will give an

idea of them by stating that the same *useful results* might have been insured for a twentieth part of the sum. On the 1st of May, having convoked the Executive Commission, the War Commission, and the general officers to a council of war, I agreed with Jourde, the Finance delegate, that we would study together that very evening, a plan for reducing the allowance made to the National Guard to the same rate as the pay of the army, with something over, and for allowing to women and children, by way of assistance, a sum superior to the seventy-five centimes hitherto allotted to the women, and this by way of compensation, and to cause the reduction in the pay of the National Guards to be admitted. Jourde engaged moreover to find and to set at work the necessary *employés* for distributing and regularising the allotments of pay and for controlling the disposal of the funds. Forty active and honourable accountants were wanted at once. Neither of the above plans came to anything. The Executive Commission having been dethroned in the same day's sitting, Jourde struggled for

two days at the Commune against the creation of the Committee of Public Safety; and the pay question stood as it was when I arrived.

I had a commission of three members nominated to judge Mégy. Dombrowski, Eudes, and Bergeret were those three members. The commission never met.

On the 30th of April I drew up a plan for a tactical and administrative group of five battalions, commanded by a colonel and two lieutenant-colonels, to serve as a basis for the organisation of an active army. I instructed Bergeret to choose five battalions, which were known to him, of from 400 to 500 effective men each, to form a regiment. Eudes was to form two regiments likewise in Paris. Dombrowski agreed to form three, and then a fourth, within the limits of his command. La Cecilia, who was going to take the command of the centre, asked also for a regiment to form. Each of those regiments was to return the numerous flags and pennons of which the Federals made such an abuse, and receive in exchange a four-pounder gun or a mitrailleuse per battalion.

Thus I had put on the stocks, as far back as May 1st, eight regiments, which were in reality active brigades, of about 2000 men each, and forty field-pieces. At the same time I destined to Wroblewski, who commanded the left wing, all the available cavalry, unfortunately but few in number.

Although I endeavour to exclude from this memorandum all considerations of military art and of politics, I must here observe, that this attempt at organisation, destined to permit me to give battle before Paris, was the sole chance of success for the defenders. In confining oneself to a passive defence, one could only delay the fall of the fortifications—the inevitable conclusion of a regular attack. As for the mode of organisation which I had adopted, let the purists in military art decide whether it was fitted to the character of the troops at my disposal, and to other circumstances. I had projected to add to it a battery of twelve or sixteen cannon of the largest bore.

Whilst I was taking these measures, I divided amongst the members of the War Commission the

principal services of the department. Avrial had already taken charge of the artillery; Bergeret, instead of Delescluze, who was ill, had charge of the clothing; at the same time he set afoot the manufacture of earth-bags for the defence, and of provision-bags for the marching battalions. Arnold undertook to institute an examining committee for the office, in order to get rid of all the useless and ignorant wearers of lace who encumbered the town. Tridon, the most capable and the most respected of them all, but whose ruined health did not admit of regular work, took charge of all that concerned the commissariat, and began by imprisoning the brothers May, who were carrying on that service. I must say, that all these functions, accepted without hesitation, were exercised with much lukewarmness.

I have said that I had sent Eudes to the fort of Issy. The revolutionary notoriety of the man had led me to make that choice. He had every interest in defending the Revolution, and would be nothing without it. I thought him too prominently placed to show want of spirit. He went to

his post with regret on the 1st of May, leaving at Paris the chief of his staff, Collet, and a portion of his numerous staff itself, to organise his regiments. No sooner was he arrived at the fort of Issy, than his sole thought was how to get away from it. He sent to the Commune, to the Committee of Public Safety, to the town, and to the Ministry, despatches, in which he expressed in warm terms, the impossibility of holding out any longer, and the necessity for having reinforcements, provisions, ammunition, clothes, tobacco, cannons, &c. Pyat, who was in all the fervour of his first day's government, answered him by sending me pressing despatches: 'Preserve Fort Issy at any cost.'

The 2d of May Gérardin informed me of the assumption of power by the Committee of Public Safety, and invited me to attend at the Commune, after which I should dine with the new Government. To describe that day's business, it would be necessary frankly to adopt the humorous style which is suited to a tale at once grave and grotesque. Let it suffice to say, that I brought down

volleys of applause from that tetchy assembly, which was not insensible to truth spoken without respect of persons and straightforwardly. I passed the evening at the Hôtel de Ville, with the members of the Committee of Public Safety. I believe those gentlemen expected me to submit to them a plan of organisation or defence; and Félix Pyat in particular spoke profusely on military matters, which he viewed in the narrowest light. At last one of the other members of the Committee having spoken of the measures he was taking in his district to establish the National Guard and reform abuses, 'You, at least,' said I, 'are reasonable.' Pyat inquired sharply if I meant to say that he was not so. I began laughing, and we were mortal enemies.

The following day Eudes became more and more pressing, and his urgent despatches made me determine to go to Fort Issy, and make an effort to relieve him. I took with me a part of the battalion on guard at the department, which was to wait for me at Vanves; but divers accidents, and in particular a fall from my horse, de-

layed me so much, that I could only reach the fort at night with three battalions which I had picked up on the road, and whose presence served to renew the courage of the defenders. I gave some important instructions to Eudes, who had taken up his quarters in the darkest and least-exposed casemate of the fort, and who still complained of the danger. One only of all my instructions was carried out, and procured us a success.

But what was strangest in this adventure was my meeting at the fort, Dombrowski, to whom I had long since assigned the command of the right bank, and who was as astonished by my arrival as I had been by his presence; for he had just received from the Committee of Public Safety an order investing him with the command of all the active forces, but leaving me the Ministry of War.

We were—Dombrowski and I—on the most amicable terms. He therefore told me, whilst we were eating a piece of bread in Eudes' casemate, not to interrupt my organising labours any more; and that he would, in virtue of his new powers, undertake all the active work.

I agreed with him, and told him that when we had settled what operations were to be undertaken, I should be very happy to confide their execution to him. Already, in the course of the month of April, Dombrowski had received full powers to direct all the operations; but he had established himself in Neuilly without giving a thought to the southern line. The experiment had, therefore, been tried; and I did not see any reason for confiding the whole length of the line to him.

On returning to the department, I wrote to Gérardin, to reproach him for this surprise. The next day I explained my motives, and the inopportuneness of a single military command. The first decree was revoked, and Dombrowski again became the commander of the attacked points of the right bank. I cannot here fully discuss the causes of my determination. It is certain that these successive decrees were the cause of jealousy between Dombrowski and myself.

Pyat's government did not stop there. He sent an order to Wroblewski, who commanded the

left wing from the Biévre to the Seine, to go to the assistance of Fort Issy. Wroblewski, a careful and methodical man, complained of receiving orders from all quarters, but thought himself nevertheless bound to obey the Committee of Public Safety. He passed the night of the 3d at Issy; and during his absence, the redoubt of Moulin Saquet, which depended upon his command, was surprised by the enemy, and the cannons carried off. There was a stampede, a panic and emotion in the town; and Wroblewski, in accounting to me for the event, excused himself by his absence, and the impossibility he had laboured under of exerting his usual supervision over the advanced posts. In fact, he was, as I have said, very careful; and at all events, if he could not have prevented the accident, his presence would have diminished its effects.

I had another cause of complaint against the Committee of Public Safety. On the 2d of May a Prussian, bearing a flag of truce, had come to the Hôtel de Ville, where I had seen him, to bring a letter from his general to complain to the Com-

mune of the arming of the fort of Vincennes, and claiming the right to visit the fort the next day at two P.M. This arming was the work of a blundering commandant, and I immediately gave orders in consequence. I sent back without an answer the truce-bearer, who had orders to wait for one, and I suggested to Paschal Grousset, the Foreign Affairs delegate, the sense of the answer he was to give. He communicated to me during the night the very proper letter he had addressed to the Prussian general, in which he begged him to observe that a general officer had no right to correspond with the sovereign Assembly of Paris, but must communicate with the military authorities. After this reminder as to international propriety, he told him that the officer whom the Prussians would send the following day would be admitted and receive satisfaction. The officer did come; but instead of referring to the orderly officer whom I had sent, he found two officers of the National Guard, under the direct orders of Paschal Grousset, who showed him whatever he wished to see in the fort of Vincennes.

l those encroachments of the civil authority, er all that disorder, had serious consequences. rect orders given by the Committee of Pub- ety paralysed and thwarted the action of the legate, who had no reason for existing if one save him directed operations. This is went and told the Commune on the 4th; especially attached myself to Félix Pyat, ching him with the despatches with which rwhelmed the individual commanders, with- rning me, and making him answerable for evil results which might follow. Pyat de- himself like a pitiful fellow, and formally ever having signed such order; which state- bliged me to produce the originals, and es- y the order which had displaced Wroblewski is command. Those orders were produced ay in the Commune by the members of the Commission, and obliged Félix Pyat to offer signation as member of the Committee of Safety.

l this constitutes a complicated narrative, e rather difficult to follow; but I have still

more intrigues and complications to tell of, and I am certain that at the same time many others were going on of which I had no knowledge.

The Central Committee of the Federation of the National Guard — that same Central Committee which had managed the Revolution at the beginning, though much enfeebled by the election of its most influential member to the Commune — still continued to exist, and had not ceased to give underhand orders, to receive appeals and complaints, and to proceed to elections. It considered that the part it played in a revolution of which it held itself to be the father, the guardian, and the legitimate owner, was a very petty one. It therefore availed itself of the change of system which took place at the end of April to offer its support to the new Government; and at the moment when I was speaking against Félix Pyat in the Commune, the deputies of the Central Committee were awaiting the decision of the Committee of Public Safety, who had made an appointment with them to settle the question at issue.

When I left the Commune, Gérardin took me

to the Committee of Public Safety, and the decision to be taken was left to me. There was some discussion. The deputies of the Central Committee, who were really the most intelligent and the most resolute members of that assembly, laid stress upon their power of acting upon the National Guard, and the facility with which they could cause to be accepted and carried out the measures which passed through their hands. As I pressed them with inquiries as to whether they had enough resolute and experienced men to direct the different branches of the service, 'We have felt our pulse,' said one of them; 'and we are up to the mark.'

I therefore consented to make over to them the administrative branch and the organisation services dependent upon my department, for the following reasons.

It was impossible for me to seek support from the Commune, whose resolutions were constantly fluctuating, and who showed but little inclination for business, but exhausted themselves in barren discussions and quarrels. The Executive Com-

mission, formed of delegates for the different branches of the service, was without power and without will, since it had been thrust into the background by the invention of the Committee of Public Safety. The War Commission was composed of five members, of whom three alone did any work, and even their labours were unproductive, on account of their want of capacity for government. In their situation, it was less a question of working themselves than of making others work; and I believe that Tridon alone might have had that gift. As for the Committee of Public Safety, it was only the ghost of a power. All those people never understood the old Revolution; they never saw deeper than its rind, and had no idea of the immense labour which insured the success of the Revolutionists of 1793. I had therefore nothing serious to lean upon: the reform of the pay-roll, and the mobilisation of an army—the two things necessary to achieve success—were set aside or adjourned; and I resolved, as a last chance, to employ the Central Committee.

It is with unfeigned disgust that I return to the rapid events of that short period, and this sentiment prevents me, I fear, from giving all the necessary details. The remembrance of all those presumptuous revolutionists, devoid of study and of energy, capable, perhaps, of a sudden stroke, but not of exerting will and keeping to a purpose,—their remembrance, I repeat, is a nightmare for me.

The Central Committee of the Federation was incapable of managing anything. Powerful to impede and disorganise, because of the league of which it was the centre, it proved absolutely incompetent to create. The 5th and 6th I saw some of its members; they were the most willing (and, indeed, only the most capable were sent to me), and had divided themselves into commissions for the different branches of the service; but the time for action was taken up by the confused sittings of the Assembly, and, considered as a whole, the mass of the Committee were neither intelligent nor enlightened.

Fort Issy was still the most threatened point

of the outworks. Eudes had abandoned it, leaving it in charge of Collet, the chief of his staff, a man of small merit. To make up for this I had sent there an Engineer of talent and of courage, who took advantage of every moment's respite left him by the enemy to repair the fortifications. I went twice again to this point of attack, but without succeeding in getting the troops to execute a movement. At last, on the 7th May, I had become convinced that I should not succeed in collecting a sufficient number of capable men for the department, and that the Committee of Public Safety would or could not assist me, either through want of energy or of confidence. There was only one chance left of improving the position of military affairs, which was becoming very threatening, and that was suddenly to take the offensive, with the troops just as they were, to interrupt the progress of the attack by inspiring the enemy with serious anxiety.

My attempt at organising active troops had meanwhile begun to be carried out, but it had

everywhere been met by obstacles. The name of regiments, which I had adopted instead of that of brigades, not to increase the number of generals, had given umbrage to the chiefs of legions, who feared that arrangement would deprive them of their authority.

The officer whose duty it was to report upon the ministerial legions, and to centralise all that concerned the organisation, fomented this mistrust to such an extent as to impede the completion of several regiments. I have said how much I suspected that officer; I learnt at last that he had, without orders, convoked the chiefs of the legions and the heads of their staffs; upon which I had him arrested. A commission of the Central Committee undertook his duties.

It was probably on the 7th of May that I paid my last visit to Fort Issy; I will speak of it with some detail, and shall take this opportunity of mentioning certain circumstances which may prove serviceable for my defence.

General La Cecilia commanded at Little Vanves, where I had withdrawn, several days before,

the troops destined for the defence of the village of Issy, so that they might rest with security. Always anxious to attack the enemy's posts, which was the only way of rendering the defence effective, I had sent La Cecilia an order to collect his troops at three or four o'clock in the morning. I arrived at Little Vanves at the hour agreed upon, but the troops were not assembled. It is a serious business to collect National Guards at a given time, and I was several hours with General La Cecilia without his being able to assemble his men. Whilst one battalion was arriving, another disappeared.

It was there that I inflicted punishment on several National Guards who had deserted their post; an inoffensive punishment, but one which made a deep impression upon them. I had their right sleeves cut off, commencing with the officers. They were all sobbing, and the guard which surrounded them was, perhaps, more affected than it would have been for a capital execution. I will say, with reference to this, that, thanks to a strange chance much more

than to the effect of my will, I have never caused the death of a man. I pronounced before the Military Court a sentence of death, but it was commuted without my interference. As great an enemy to killing as to warfare, I nevertheless accept all the consequences of the situations in which I am placed. On the 7th of May I had not sufficient faith in the efficiency of our resistance to resort to repressive measures.

The same day I visited Fort Issy, which was cruelly bombarded by the enemy. It rarely takes place during a war, that the firing should be so violent as that which for a fortnight was poured into that miserable building. I passed several hours there in order to be acquainted with everything. Collet then commanded, and his character did not permit me to hope for a prolonged defence.

I had ordered intrenchments to be dug at the Issy Lyceum, which occupies a very good position to the rear of the fort. I had hoped that it would be possible to detain the enemy there some time after the fall of the fort, and I had sent

out several detachments of barricade-makers, who were navvies, or other workmen of the same class; but they could not make up their mind to work under fire, and my instructions were not carried out.

I have come at last to the end of my story. On the 8th of May the chiefs of legions assembled to protest against the formation of regiments. Several of them, who were sent to me to discuss the subject, affirmed that their authority was sufficiently well established to enable them to take the field at once, and they promised me for the morrow twenty-five battalions of 500 men each. I had but little faith in this; but as a success was essential, if only to give time for the defence, I resolved, if they brought me a few battalions in good order, to take them out and fight. I also ordered out Bergeret's regiment, which was more advanced than the others. Bergeret promised it to me, but excused himself at the last moment for three battalions, who refused to march for want of I don't know what appurtenances. Several chiefs of legions also came to tell me in the

evening that they would be unable to furnish the troops they had promised.

It was then that I dictated my resignation, of which I sent copies to the most widely-circulated newspapers. A moment afterwards I learnt that the tricolor flag was flying from Fort Issy, which had been abandoned the day before by its garrison, and which I had vainly tried to have reoccupied. I went afterwards, to satisfy my conscience, to see the troops which the chiefs of legions had collected, and I had them counted exactly. They did not amount to 5000 men—and those were pitiful troops. The Commune, on receiving my letter, sent me two successive deputations to beg me to withdraw my resignation. On my refusal, it ordered the War Commission to take the direction of the war delegation, and to arrest me.

At the same time the Central Committee, which was sitting at the Ministry of War, was sending me deputation after deputation to ask me to attend its sitting. I had to give way to this importunity, and I gave them the information they

asked me for, explaining to them that I could not do the whole work—be at once corporal and general, and run right and left to bring back under fire people who were tired of fighting; whilst all those who ought to have been at work were occupied in very ill-timed deliberations. The Central Committee was stupefied. After leaving them I went to dine with Dombrowski, where I received an envoy from the Central Committee, informing me that they were going to ask the Commune to grant me full powers.

At about ten o'clock I returned to the Ministry, where it was not long before I received the whole War Commission, backed up by Johannard and Delescluze. After the first compliments Delescluze reproached me for having posted up the fall of Fort Issy. I answered sharply enough that the people should be the first to get news of such importance. We argued this point some time, as it was the most serious grievance the Commune had against me; and the Commission, which had brought the order of my arrest, went away without communicating it

to me, and begged me to continue in the exercise of my functions until the next day; which I only consented to do on the condition that one of the members of the Commission should remain in my office, so that I should have nothing to sign.

The following morning the Commission, much embarrassed at not having executed its formal mandate, sent me two of its members to beg me to accompany them to the Hôtel de Ville in my carriage; and I remained at the Questure until five o'clock, neither free nor a prisoner. At five o'clock Gérardin came and joined me with the intention of demanding to be imprisoned with me. The sitting of the Commune had been tumultuous. No explanation was listened to, and a decree of accusation had been passed against me. A court-martial, of which Collet was to be president, had even been named. I could not bear the idea of appearing as an accused before that Collet, whom I had seen cowering before the shells at Issy, and it was then that I determined to evade the justice of the Commune. I took Gérardin in my carriage, which transported us

to the Boulevard St. Michel, and each of us went in search of a hiding-place.

The new Committee of Public Safety, on which figured the names of Arnaud, Billioray, Eudes, and Gambon, did not cease until the last day of their authority to attribute the fall of Fort Issy to *my treachery*. Félix Pyat and Vallés honoured me by opening the case against me in the columns of their papers, and I was even the subject of several leading-Pyats, in which it was demonstrated that I had aspired to tyranny. Last of all, a Versailles newspaper (*Paris Journal*) published a fictive act of accusation against me, in which it was established when, how, and through whom, I had received 500,000 francs for perpetrating that act of treachery.

I am now at the end of the task I had undertaken—to relate the part played by me in the insurrection; a task which has not been wanting in bitterness; for I have had to go over again, one by one, all my lost illusions, my disappointments, and my unrealised hopes.

I served the Revolution faithfully, blindly,

until the day when I had experienced for myself all the vanity of the hopes I had based on that experiment. The Commune had no statesmen and no soldiers, and did not wish to have any. It surrounded itself with ruins, without having either the power or the desire to create anew. An enemy of publicity because it knew its own folly, an enemy of liberty because it was so feebly balanced that the least movement would upset it, that oligarchy was the most odious despotism imaginable. With but one process of government, which consisted of keeping the people in its pay, it squandered by its prodigality the savings of democracy and its hopes, because it rendered the people unaccustomed to work. When I saw that the evil was hopeless — that every effort, every sacrifice, would be fruitless—the part I had to play in it ended.

Supplementary Notes.

I ONLY wore uniform when it was strictly necessary. I have even visited the forts and points of attack in plain clothes. Up to the 1st of May I had only once put on my uniform, for a sitting of the Military Court. I had presided at the other sittings in plain clothes, dressed as I am at present.

My staff was composed only of subaltern officers; it was the least numerous of all, although my functions were the most important.

I never took an escort, but only, when necessary, platoons on horseback, without arms, to hold the horses, and to carry the field-glasses and the maps.

Rather a singular fact, which I remarked several times—when the troops or Federal guards saluted me as I passed with the cry of 'Long live

the Commune!' I replied by a wave of the hand; sometimes also by crying, 'Long live the Commune!' But the officers of my staff never answered otherwise than 'Long live the Republic!'

The Military Court, in spite of what the Report* says, never pronounced but one sentence of death, which was not carried out.

It is false that my orders were in perfect agreement with the Commune. On the contrary, it was the constant and incurable disagreement between my orders and the system of the Commune which brought on my resignation. If there had been perfect agreement between us, I should not have left the Commune, and the Commune would not have proscribed me.

The need for a democratic revolution certainly exists. The inferior classes are too powerful not to make their weight felt in the government of the country, and too dissatisfied to refrain from

* This is the Report on which were founded the accusations brought against him before the Versailles Court-martial. It was in reply to this Report that Rossel drew up the preceding memorandum and the greater part of the accompanying notes. J. A.

claiming at every opportunity a larger share in it. The well-to-do class, which has withheld the power from them by means of the elective seats on the one hand, and of the dynasties of officials drawn from their body on the other, has made use of this power in a manner most disastrous to the public interest, by throwing the heaviest burdens on the inferior classes.

For instance, amongst the direct taxes, trading licenses are so organised as to favour the great manufacturing interest; amongst indirect taxes, necessaries bear the burden rather than articles of luxury.

But I am better acquainted with the military laws than with other branches of the subject. The degenerate condition of our army is caused by the alterations in our military institutions, which have been incessantly introduced since 1830. The wealthy classes, constantly favoured by the law of substitutes, are withdrawn from the defence of the country, which has been confided to the indigent and to mercenaries. To recruit officers from the ranks has become difficult, and non-commissioned

officers impossible. The army has degenerated little by little.

The events of the past year are the result of forty years' misgovernment. When I saw the Bordeaux Assembly tending violently towards the past, I thought that the fantastic future dreamt of by the Paris democrats could not prove more pernicious than a retrograde movement.

It is a remarkable fact, and one not beside the question, that the Commune constantly chose its agents out of the minority, or what might be termed the opposition. And this because the majority contained no capable, cultivated, or special men.

Jourde, Delescluze, and Varlin belonged to that minority which rendered itself indispensable by its estimable character and its knowledge, but which was constantly envied and assailed, and which, on the other hand, did not spare the majority. It was only after I was proscribed that the majority came into power by the renewal of the Committee of Public Safety (Eudes is the most characteristic name on the new committee), and

later by that of the War Commission. It was then that the agitation rose to the pitch of insanity.

For my part, I was brought forward and sustained by the minority, which, to speak truth, was deficient in men of capacity since the Avrials and the Arnolds, men of little science and little character, held the highest rank in it. I was always opposed to the line of policy taken by the Commune; it was at my suggestion, and by the pressure I exercised through the *Père Duchêne*, that the publicity of its sittings was obtained. I often told the members of the Commune who came across me, that the people had not made the Revolution to be governed by the Commune, but to govern themselves. I favoured publicity as much as I could, and I never contributed to the publication of the false statements which were brought forward by the *Officiel*. The journalists who applied to me—and they were principally the English, the Americans, and the 'Sociale'—had the authentic despatches communicated to them. Publicity could only do us good.

Since I have known the Commune, I have never hoped that the Revolution would triumph by means of the Commune, but in spite of the Commune.

'Avrial is a dangerous dog,' that trembler of a Regère was wont to say; 'but you have got a firm hold on him.'

This is Avrial: 'I enlisted at nineteen, I don't know why; I became a non-commissioned officer, and took to thinking and meddling with politics. Naturally I was ill-thought of in the army. At twenty-five I left the service, also without knowing why. It was necessary to get a living: I returned to my old trade as an engineer. And fancy my folly! six months afterwards I married. At the same time I went into business; but was unfortunate, and after six months had lost 4000 francs. My wife had fortunately brought me something—some 10,000 francs. But I also invented things. I have invented a gas-machine which is at Lyons at M. X.'s.

'Ten months after my marriage all my furniture and all my clothes were in pawn. I worked

five years before I could take them out again. My furniture, though not costly, was pretty and very neat. All this time I lived on the sixth floor, sleeping on a mattress supported by chairs. Nobody entered my room, and the key was always in my pocket, that it should not be seen.

'I then worked at a gas machine, Lenoir's engine. It has often happened to me on Saturdays, or even on Fridays, the eve of pay-day, not to stay at home for breakfast, knowing that there was barely enough for my wife and child. I went out for a walk, and strolled about whilst the others were breakfasting.

'I worked hard at that time; I read everything I could lay my hands on.'

Avrial was of herculean build; he was a member of the War Commission, and from the first had taken charge of the artillery. He followed slowly but exactly all the suggestions I made to him, but nothing more. The day before yesterday evening in he comes, with the remainder of the Commission, the order for my arrest in their pockets, and they go away without executing it,

leaving the decision and signature of all military measures still in my hands. Yesterday morning Avrial comes up again with Johannard, and they tell me the history of the order for my arrest, and how embarrassed they felt—placed as they were between the positive orders they had received, and their equally positive resolution not to put them into execution. They add, that all the members of the Commission were as anxious as themselves to have the honour of making this communication to me, and that they all join in begging me to repeat to the Commune the explanation I furnished them with yesterday. Upon this, I get up, give them breakfast, have the horses put to, and drive them to the Hôtel de Ville; where we learn that the Commune has adjourned its sittings from ten to one, and then from one to two o'clock.

We go down to the 'Chambre à coucher de Valentine,' where Eudes and another member of the Committee of Public Safety are breakfasting. I stretch myself on a sofa, and am soon left alone, now with Johannard, and now with Avrial, who

have certainly declared that I am free to go if I please; but who nevertheless consider themselves to some extent responsible for my safe custody. 'Twas there I talked at length with Avrial on the social question; and I am not sorry to put upon paper the ideas of a man who has had bitter opportunities of studying the subject, and who has had the privilege of seeing his theories put into practice.

We talked of savings, salaries, tools, and capital. Then he spoke to me of his studies, his attempts, the money he had spent to buy books or to found workmen's associations, sometimes taking pride in the partial success achieved, sometimes pretending that their success was impossible.

'I have founded three,' he said; 'and one still exists—the Association of Working Engineers. Unfortunately, we began during the siege, only ten ounces of bread were allowed, and we could not produce anything. Then we were stopped by the want of money—10,000 francs from the Government, and 4000 francs some one had advanced to me, were swallowed up by the larger implements;

we had to find the smaller ourselves.' Then speaking with greater confidence: 'The same thing takes place in those associations as in the National Guard; the overseer and director are elected, a meeting takes place on Thursday, speeches are made, and the director is changed. Look at the workshops belonging to the Commune at the Louvre, for repairing arms; they have elected their third director, and they do nothing. They came to the Association of Working Engineers whenever they chose, talked a good deal, and did no work. There were one hundred wheels to be greased, the engine eating coal and water at the rate of one hundred workmen, instead of the fifty who worked. They always answered, "I'll make up for it afterwards;" but they could not understand that they would not be able to make up the general expenditure. They have no head for accounts. Do you know how many muskets we made during the siege?'

Here he mentioned an absurd figure—at the rate of one musket for from thirty to fifty days' work!

'The other day,' he added, 'they went to Issy to unspike the cannon, and asked for eightpence each for the hour. I have still some influence over them, so I told them that no one earns eightpence like that nowadays—the National Guards get 1*s.* 3*d.* a day, and you are National Guards. But as you may have been put to some expense out there, here's 4*s.* for you. Well, I'm sure they have a grudge against me for it.'

All this was not said without sadness.

This proves more against the Paris workmen than against the doctrine of workmen's associations; at all events, it is worth taking note of, for it is the fruit of a bitter experience. The quarrelsome soldier who has become a member of the Commune of Paris, after feeling an inventor's inspiration and the anguish of the father of a family who cannot get bread, must know a good deal about the social theory—especially when, as is the case with Avrial, he has swallowed up a portion of his salary in the purchase of those intoxicating and perfidious books which promise an easy success, as the result of a lame and fallacious

system; and has given up his time and life to the construction of workmen's associations, to end with me on this trembling scaffolding of the French Revolution.

'Communism,' he said, 'is humbug. The workers must not feed the idlers; he who earns twelve should receive twelve, and he who earns six should receive six. When I enter into an association, either in America or elsewhere, it shall be with one, two, or three friends, whom I know well, and not with the first comers.'

May 11, 1871, Midnight.

MÉGY was a stupid workman. It was the 30th of April; Cluseret had left the Ministry to go to Fort Issy, whence he was to go to Mazas.* I was told that Mégy had arrived. I had him brought into the Minister's room, where Seguin came with me, and asked for an account of what had caused him to evacuate the fort he com-

* A prison.

manded. I could only get a few meaningless words out of him: seeing that the enemy's fire silenced his artillery, he had spiked the cannon, hidden the breech-pieces, sent out the garrison, and had himself been the last to leave the fort. He had stopped neither at the village of Issy nor at the ramparts, and had reëntered the town, abandoning both the fortress and the garrison. As he was trying to explain to me that it was impossible to hold out, I reminded him of the instructions I had given him by letter the day he assumed command, and told him that I regretted that he had not answered me as I had asked him to do, for I might have explained obscure or uncertain points. 'For my part,' said he, 'I took it as a joke. You spoke to me as one speaks to a child.' This acknowledgment of a letter in which I had treated that doubtful hero with a kind of deference, wounded me deeply. Mégy maintained the same level during the remainder of the conversation, pluming himself on a sort of resolution to abide by all the consequences of his deeds. He then remained confined to the Ministry, whence

Eudes took him to Issy. He is rather a handsome fellow, dark and young; he wears the disguise of a colonel.

If you ask me, 'Which is preferable, Mégy or Gallifet?' I vote for Mégy, who after all has a better right to be wanting in feeling.

May 11, 1871, Midnight.

THOSE fellows are not courageous. I think there is but little courage amongst the wearers of gold lace. Real soldiers and real democrats—I have seen some from time to time — despise death, and even despise gold lace. I could quote pretty examples of timidity, cowardice, indifference to duty, and mean and silly passions.

The Overthrow of the Commune.

THE rumour of the entrance of the regular troops into Paris spread the same evening, and was confirmed the next morning. A kind of stupor seemed to have fallen upon every one, and it is probable that the army, by pushing forward, could in the morning have occupied the town itself. The first story was that the St. Cloud gate had been surprised, or given up; the 93d battalion of the National Guard was mentioned. The besieger had made astounding progress in the south-western district; at the same time with the fall of the outer line, we had been informed of the occupation of the Trocadéro, the Military School, and the Invalides. Razoua and Vinot had fled without fighting. The War Department had been evacuated.

The military leaders of the Commune had

inherited from their regular predecessors that mania for administrative centralisation which has so often proved fatal to us. As despotic and centralising a Government as the foregoing one, the Commune had left the almost exclusive monopoly of furnishing bread to the soldiers to the establishment of the Quai de Billy. This was one of the few services conducted by conscientious and capable agents. The army found 40,000 loaves, or 80,000 rations, at the establishment.

Colonel Henry had striven to collect the whole *matériel* of the artillery at the Military School; but the jealousy of the different leaders, the smallness of the means of action, and the personal opposition of Colonel Rossel, who was formally opposed to all centralisation, were so many obstacles which prevented Colonel Henry from carrying out his plan.

Ever since the beginning of the insurrection there had been at the school itself a considerable number of large-bore cannon, mortars on their stands, 24-pounders, smooth-bored and rifled, on stands or trucks, and mitrailleuses of different

systems. At the Champ de Mars there was a park of artillery-carriages, sufficiently numerous to constitute, with the corresponding cannon, the military wealth of a nation. The people, less jealous of those appliances than of the cannon themselves, had treated them with contempt. There were numerous files of caissons, forges, battery-chariots, and siege-carts, a great number of loaded wagons, some of which bore a new set of half-pontoons: there were also some caissons on two wheels, and some baggage-wagons of the auxiliary train. A certain appearance of order reigned in that immense artillery-park, of which the insurrection was incapable of making use.

The first progress of the army in Paris made over to them, therefore, a large portion of the resources centralised by the insurrection. The riding ground of the Military School, the out-buildings of the school, the dépôt of the Rue Beethoven at Passy, were ammunition magazines containing great wealth. These last stretched, it is said, under a great portion of the Trocadéro; it was a succession of vaults, and the inventory of

the ammunition they contained was never made. At the school and the outbuildings, conscientious officials had preserved order in the midst of the squandering of the national wealth. The *personnel* of the artillery was also to have been centralised at the Military School; the cavalry and the train artillery had their offices there. By a strange touch of irony, of which similar instances have often recurred in the irregular disasters of our poor France, the Commune newspapers published, the day after the fall of the Military School, an official notice from Citizen Assi, to the effect that ammunition should henceforward only be made over on the receipt of orders viséd at the Military School.

The two banks had been penetrated at the same time, and the first accounts related the adventurous advance of a sergeant with four men, who had crossed the viaduct at Auteuil, and had advanced a good way on the left bank, talking with the population, resting from their fatigues, and receiving a glass of wine from some woman. There is no better proof of the incurable ineffi-

ciency of the National Guard for regular service, than this peaceful stroll of an enemy's patrol within the menaced ramparts.

The army's first object seems to have been to stretch out along the ramparts; it appears to have made specially rapid progress on the right bank; for it was soon announced that it had turned the Montmartre mounds by the north, having thus occupied the ramparts of the 16th, 17th, and 18th districts.

Towards midday, a certain activity replaced the previous stupor. Paris was being covered with barricades! But the barricade of 1871 is really but a poor fortification. It is a wall of paving-stones, from 5 feet to 6 feet in height, and from 3 feet 4 inches to 5 feet in thickness, sometimes faced and sometimes battlemented with paving-stones. Once taken, this miserable intrenchment is turned against its defenders, as both sides are alike. To construct them, the passers-by were stopped, a battalion of National Guards occupied the spot, and the sentinels called upon the stroller, *nolens volens*, to furnish

his paving-stone for the defence. This was a vexatious and ineffectual proceeding: if the National Guards themselves had set to work, in spite of their laziness it would have got on much faster and much better. It gave rise to scenes of different characters. 'Now then, citizen,' would a sentry say, 'a paving-stone for yourself and one for your wife.' And the man called upon would divest himself briskly of his coat, put it on his wife's arm, and furnish his share of work. There were also those who resisted, and the Federals were sometimes as many as eight to escort one of those obstinate ones.

The night of the occupation was spent in collecting all the forces of the Commune. The drum beat all night; in the morning the battalions began to assemble, and the imminence of the danger restoring a little energy to the defenders of the Commune, they were more numerous than usual; the most lukewarm had been threatened and pointed out, and did not dare to evade the call. On the other hand, the equipment was more varied than ever, and more than

ever the question presented itself as to what had become of the military clothing profusely distributed by the Commune. A large number of the Guards had blouses or frock-coats instead of the uniform overcoat; several had on their working trousers, and even caps or hats.

The Parisian recovers in the war of barricades the vigour in which he is deficient for defending ramparts or in open warfare; the possibility of taking flight and escaping the consequences of defeat by going home, only to resume his arms at a convenient moment, gives him the same feeling of safety which regular troops derive from the 'shoulder to shoulder' and the companionship under their flag. It is not a paradox to say that the uniform deprives the rioter of a portion of his courage; the men in blouses have more energy, more dash, and more military valour than the National Guards, and especially than the officers of National Guards.

In organising their last means of defence, the Federals grew tyrannical and vexatious. Their habitual mistrust was carried to an extreme, espe-

cially in the quarters where they felt sure of their strength. The inhabitants had to open the venetian blinds, shut the windows, and raise the curtains; a partly open window, a face looking out, provoked the cries of the sentries, and sometimes even a search. The motive of all this fuss was the fear lest the defenders of the barricades should be killed from the windows by means of shots fired from air-guns behind their backs. It is certain that balls were often heard to whistle through the streets without any warning report; sometimes even National Guards were wounded in this manner. This is caused by stray bullets, which may come more than a mile, when fired from the musket of some clumsy or scared marksman who has pulled the trigger without aiming. Such bullets are sometimes heard to whistle over the houses.

Very soon the wine merchants were called upon to furnish drink, and the bakers bread, for nothing; they had to comply with these demands, but of course made as many difficulties as they could.

On the 23d I learnt the progress of the attack, and the burning of the Ministry of Finance, which was at first attributed to the people of the Commune; but the party newspapers stated 'that they had succeeded in quenching the flames at the Ministry of Finance.'

The 24th, the firing of the Hôtel de Ville made known the intentions of the Revolutionists. Between nine and ten o'clock in the morning the flames darted from the turrets, and were for several hours the signal chimney of the fire; then other fires broke out to the west of the first, and it was known that the Préfecture of Police and the Tuileries were burning under the protection of the Federals.

The majority of the Commune may justly be accused of those crimes. Félix Pyat and the Blanquists were their instigators. On the 23d Félix Pyat opened his newspaper with an article entitled 'What shall we do with the Tuileries?' The victors were already in Paris, and the scoundrel was thinking more of revenging defeat than of snatching success from the enemies of the Re-

volution. The Palace of the Légion d'Honneur was Eudes' head-quarters, the Legislative Assembly those of Bergeret, to whom the Cours des Comptes had also been confided for the cantonment of a portion of his battalions.

The Ministry of War, on the contrary, was preserved; because the majority of the Commune could never find amongst its members any one to whom to confide the management of the war. Cluseret, Rossel, Delescluze, were dissidents, almost enemies; and as for Eudes, the minister for the first days, his occupation never extended beyond the kitchen.

It is very probable that the War Dépôt, the Fortifications Dépôt, and St. Thomas d'Aquin have fallen intact into the hands of the regular army; a large part of the military wealth of those grand collections had been conveyed into the provinces before the siege. The rest was carefully protected by the war delegates, especially the model arms which were at St. Thomas d'Aquin, and which the insurrection coveted.

The means of action possessed by the French

War Ministry, though barren in the hands of our officers and barren in the hands of the insurrection, are powerful means of destruction, and the ephemeral occupants of the Ministry were sufficiently intelligent revolutionists, not to deprive future revolutions of weapons so formidable, when directed against society as it at present exists.

The National Assembly manifested a violent sorrow at the news of the Paris fires; the most marked feature of those fires is, after all, only the destruction of the Grand Livre de la Rente, and even that can be made out afresh. At all events, this sensibility may seem misplaced on the part of an Assembly which agreed to the ruin and defeat of France and the abandonment of two provinces; which has pursued that work in the midst of a social crisis and civil war; and which has just consecrated it by a blind treaty, at the very moment when it has accomplished the defeat of the insurrection.

Another fact worthy of notice is the exaggeration of the news given to the public. The

burning of the Louvre and of the Sainte Chapelle is contradicted, and other disasters attenuated. The odious fact of those fires has no need of exaggeration.

On the evening of the 24th, firing began in the streets and lasted until midnight. Towards seven in the morning some soldiers appeared. The Federals had carried off their dead with the exception of two, but had left a number of muskets. The soldiers carried away a load of them. Later, two soldiers and a sergeant of the 20th line regiment come and take away the remainder; then a troop of twenty-four men without an officer search the small streets. The soldiers enter into conversation with a woman and some inhabitants who have come down into the street; yesterday every one wore some military insignia; even the street boys had a foraging-cap, or a hussar jacket, or striped trousers; some wore the military shoes with the white gaiters. To-day, on the contrary, 'plain clothes are insisted on,' not the smallest appearance of being warlike. The soldier looks con-

fident and good-natured; he forms a contrast with yesterday's National Guard, and the contrast is in his favour. He has not the dirty and ragged look of the National Guard in uniform. His belt is well put on, and his cloak does not make an ungraceful and uncomfortable roll on the shoulders.

At about nine o'clock the regiment arrives: the flag is planted on one of the barricades; the three colours look gayer than the sad red flag; and yet this tricolor flag will be stained with murders and summary executions more atrocious than any sheltered by the blood-red banner. The regiment passes on; those are French officers, their gaiters are covered with dust and mud, but in spite of fatigue they wear their uniform with coquettish ease. It is a pleasure to look at them after those shabby officers of the Commune hob-nobbing at a wine-counter with some sergeant; ragamuffins dressed as officers, and who transform into a rag the uniform into which they have been thrust: their trousers all awry, their swords between their legs, their

belts over-hanging too wide a cloak, their filthy shako crowning a filthy person, their eyes and their voice affected by wine.

Such were the scamps who pretended to deliver the country from the rule of the sword, and who could only substitute for it the rule of *delirium tremens*. But however much pleasure one may feel at getting rid of them, one must do justice to those who replace them.

The officers have not improved during this short campaign; they are still the vanquished of Sedan. The first reconnaissances, though numbering at least thirty men, had no officers. The troops have not taken advantage of the first hours of the day; the columns are too long, and show signs of disorder; the superior officers do not head their men, and the staff-officers only appear after the brigade has passed. At last the general arrives—the last of all. He has a strong voice, and avails himself of it for shouting. He wants to have the barricades demolished, and therefore they are going to search the houses and bring down the inhabitants. They made the

barricades, and must unmake them. A section sets off at once to carry out this order. The general talks of nothing less than shooting those who oppose any resistance to his wishes. Terror has certainly not disappeared with the Commune; it has only changed colours.

The vanguard company have brought up a man; he had insulted an officer. The company stops near the church, the man is placed close to the railings, and a few shots stretch him dead on the ground.

The general has taken up his quarters in the café. Two men and a woman are brought in: a moment later the prisoners issue forth; one of them is pushed up to the market wall; he hides his face, and tries to escape; a shot upsets him; he gets up, they finish him. Then the other meets with the same fate. The woman who accompanied them is in the middle of the square; the soldiers hold her back. 'But it is my brother,' she screams; 'my brother!' When the shots have rung out, they let her go. Later, another woman is brought in pale and bewildered; she

has insulted an officer; they had killed her husband, and she called him an assassin. The officer threatens to do himself justice; but she finds mercy at the general's tribunal, and goes off more dead than alive.

They begin, however, to be disgusted with killing. Two men have been brought in: the general is under the porch of the house; in passing he condemns them; but as they are removing them, the general's eye catches the horrified and frightened glance of a young girl in the house. He changes his mind, and the two men's lives are saved. The general goes upstairs and asks to see the girl, to whom he is grateful for the good impulse.

I have heard that sometimes the most feverish *Conventionnels* caressed the daughter whilst they had the father guillotined. This is one legend of the Revolution. I like that assurance in ferocity better than the indecision of the grotesque judge who pardons for a look. Why, then, had he condemned them?

Later, a worthy man in spectacles, whose fat

face is ashy with fear, is brought in; his ill-timed head-dress is a captain of the National Guards' shako; that shako was a day too late. The man is led off to the Luxembourg. A lieutenant is less fortunate; he is in full uniform. He is led to the café; the general has gone to sleep, but the tribunal does not strike work on that account; the lieutenant comes out condemned. He marches gaily to the market wall, and dies with a good grace.

All this took place on the 25th. The fighting which had raged the preceding day in the quarter of the Hôtel de Ville was appeased, or had moved on farther. The flames had spread from the Hôtel de Ville to the houses situated above it. The cannonading from the mounds of Chaumont and the Père la Chaise had increased in violence.

On the 26th the left bank, they say, is cleared. The range of the insurrection is circumscribed. The journals publish the names of a certain number of leaders of the insurrection who have been arrested and chiefly shot. At the same time they publish the assurance given by Thiers in the

Chamber, that the guilty will be judged and only punished according to the law.

The 27th, General * * * has returned; he is the hero of the market executions, but his colleagues won't remain behindhand with him. Two hundred and fifty men are said to have been shot together in the Champ de Mars. A gendarme tells of executions at the Luxembourg, where the prisoners have been shot in groups of four. The general establishes himself; when he first passed through, he had some men of the police with him; now he is surrounded by them, they have a voice in his council. But a kind of reaction has taken place in the mind of the troops with regard to those summary executions. 'Let us go,' says a soldier who sees them questioning two prisoners; 'they are going to shoot them—I don't want to see it.' The officers recommend the soldiers to be circumspect in arresting, and warn them that accusations often serve to revenge personal grudges.

Two men have been brought to General * * *. They admit that they are delegates of the Commune; they are therefore condemned to death.

But it is not a 'death without words,' for they are loaded with abuse, and silly abuse too. 'It is all your fault; you made the people march by force, and now 'tis your fault that they are shot.' O, logic! 'Your soul must be as black as your coat,' says the general. 'We will shoot you without making you suffer,' says an officer; 'if we were to give you up to the people, they would tear you to pieces.' The two patients bear these insults stoically; they are told to be silent, although they answer nothing. One is a tall, dark young man, the other a little bald man. They embrace in silence. 'Embrace your brother,' says the general, abusing them. ''Tis my son,' says the little old man. They go on abusing the unfortunate men. 'If I were not afraid of defiling myself with your blood,' continues General * * *, 'I would blow out your brains with my revolver.' At last the two delegates are led away to the Luxembourg, where the military court is sitting.

The general is gone off to the ramparts with the officers. They also belong to the vanquished of Metz and of Sedan.

De Cissey commands on the left bank, and Ladmirault on the right; those are good selections. Clinchant also commands a corps d'armée on the right bank. The same troops are marshalled under the same leaders as before the captivity; but they have assumed temporary numbers, at least in some cases.

Terror reigns everywhere. People are shot in masses on doubtful accusations; it is almost impossible to move about. The Prussians have cut the railways by removing a hundred metres of rails; they give up to the victors, the Federals who try to escape, and shoot, it is said, those who have succeeded in crossing their lines. The Commune has but few friends in Europe, but, to do it justice, it did but little to deserve to have any. Spain and Belgium, who have a just fear of the red flag, will consider the refugees of the Commune as malefactors.

Meanwhile the Versailles Assembly is entering into an unfair competition with the Commune. It has decided that the Vendôme Column shall be rebuilt, and selects the inscriptions in

lapidary's style which are to be engraved on the pedestal.

Saturday, May 27, 1871.

THE question of the pay of the National Guard was one of the most important during the Paris Revolution. No control of the funds was organised, and the public money was constantly subjected to pillage. The 'plebs' were in the pay of the Revolution, which did not dare to dismiss useless servants.

The services *rendered* should have been paid for, and the allowances and pay at military rates properly modified. The defects of the preceding system should have been avoided; all charities made over to the municipalities, and organised on the most liberal footing; but pay ought only to have been given for efficient service.

The Commune wished to assume the skin of the defunct government. It had a ministry of finance, a ministry of war, and a commissariat-general; all that was wrong in principle, and still

more wrong for the Commune, to whom it availed but little.

Is it true that the Parisian people fought for their fifteen-pence? The Central Committee and the Commune believed it; they at least believed that they would not fight without their fifteen-pence. They were mistaken: the Parisian people fought for a settlement of the social question; that problem for which history has found no solution, and which the 'abstractors of quintessence' have not given up seeking. The revolutionary leaders were unworthy of the revolutionary army; they were afraid of it; they led it to pot-houses and to places of ill-fame, and completed the moral dissolution they might have put an end to.

May 28, 11½ P.M.

DURING the last days of their rule the Federals availed themselves with revolutionary free-and-easiness of private as well as of public property. The wine-merchants, the grocers, and the

bakers were mulcted to the utmost; there are some shops which do not reopen for want of goods.

The victors have closed the wine-shops. The wine-shops are permanent clubs, 'tis there that the National Guards love to open their hearts. To a certain extent, revolutions are there manufactured, a constant exchange of ideas takes place, chiefly to the advantage of the *mercanti*. The wine-shop is like an office of public wit for the use of democracy. But if revolutions are there got up, 'tis also there that they are demolished. 'Tis there that the rioter contracts that spirit of heedless independence, that confidence in his own strength and judgment, which often takes the place of the feeling of duty and the spirit of sacrifice which may have inspired him during the first moments of the struggle, and which no longer are to be found, save in certain supreme crises.

It must not be forgotten in studying our revolution, that the people wants something, and knows what it wants. It has all the strength of

natural forces, and is, perhaps, not unconscious as they are. For eighty years the French nation has risen periodically in immense tides: surrounding everything and covering everything with foam and sand, it breaks everything that resists its impetuous current; but soon it retires, deadened, and as if defeated, to the foot of the rock which limits its flood. It would seem as if the rock were stronger than the wave; but which is victorious in the end, the rock or the wave?

Conceit, want of discipline, and drunkenness were the companions of the French army during the war of 1870, and of the National Guard of Paris in the revolution of 1871. Both the one and the other have perished miserably.

The people who led the revolution of the 18th of March seem only to have looked upon it in the light of an immense pot-house. For the National Guard it was the question of the fifteen-pence a day; the legionary committees took out their share in boxes of alimentary preserves and in current yards of gold lace. The Central Federal Committee was the champion of those noble privi-

leges; they went in for orgies, champagne, and the rest of it. Félix Pyat treated himself to Thiers' house; Courbet upset the Column. *Trahit sua quemque.* . . Beyond that, no thought for the future, no anxiety for victory.

The defeat of the Revolution of Paris is, perhaps, not a misfortune for democracy. It was a vanguard engagement badly entered upon and lost, but the reserves were not engaged; the main body itself was not affected. More than one serious democrat fought beside the Paris Commune; many abandoned it at various stages of its mad career; the more vigorous did not enter the arena, so badly was the combat commenced.

The victory will, of course, be taken advantage of at first by the most extreme amongst the victors; this is usual. Already they are shooting beyond measure in the public places, and singing *Te Deums* in the churches; but the very exercise of victory will wear out the extreme right.

Thus the ground will be cleared, on the one side, of the demagogical drunkenness of the Parisians, ever fatal to the cause it pretends to serve,

and on the other hand of the white party, who will work their victory till it leads to their own destruction.

It is wonderful to observe how those intemperate people who rise periodically in Paris have invariably been fatal to the cause of democracy. The pretended Revolutions of 1830, 1848, and 1871 were immediately made the most of by unworthy or incapable men, and have constantly strained our institutions in a sense which has nothing democratic in it.

The International Society was never seriously engaged in the Paris Revolution; it sent, it is said, money (the Commune never mentioned the fact), but it was evidently only a very uninfluential minority in the Government of Paris.

The Central Committee was always very exclusive. This is sometimes a source of strength; for it, and for the Revolution, it proved a cause of weakness. It did not seek to assimilate the external revolutionary forces; it excluded and combated them with a narrowness of judgment which was its own condemnation. Vanquished

by its own incapacity, it proceeded to elections at a moment when victory was far from certain. Having once made over to the Commune the care of completing the Revolution, it gave the new Assembly no power, and only abandoned the positions whence it was driven. The Central Committee dragged on its existence at the Hôtel de Ville, and the Artillery Committee did the same thing, whilst the sub-committees continued to get all they could out of the district administration. They had all to be got rid of; and on the 10th of April the Commune delegates were not yet masters of the mayoralties.

The death of Raoul Rigault is confirmed. Jaroslaw Dombrowski, it is said, was struck by a bullet, which penetrated the intestines. He was transported in the first instance to Lariboisière, and then to the Hôtel de Ville, where he sank rapidly beneath acute peritonitis. The death of Ladislas Dombrowski is also affirmed. The *Petite Presse* of May 29th related the discovery of the body of Delescluze, and spoke in offensive terms of that old man, who suffered so much, and who, in spite

of physical weakness, his sufferings, and his infirmities, devoted himself to his cause until his last hour.

Raoul Rigault had, it is said, great capacity. However that may be, he ought, in order to have been useful to his cause, to have refrained from debauchery and waste of time. At the Prefecture of Police he led the scandalous existence of a spendthrift rake, surrounded by useless persons, and giving up the greater part of his time to debauchery.

Jaroslaw Dombrowski was never quite frank; he accepted the advances of the Committee of Public Safety and of the Assembly of the Chiefs of Legion at the very moment that he was obeying the War Delegation. Those intrigues were more than once injurious to the cause of the defence.

Ladislas Dombrowski was a brave soldier.

Delescluze, if he had not been weakened by age and by illness, might perhaps have been the man of the Revolution. His presence at the War Ministry was marked by several good

measures, which might have restored order in the conduct of military affairs. As to technical questions, he was quite ignorant of them. It does not appear either that he was much of an administrator. All things considered, he was a worn-out man. On the 9th of March he was just recovering from a fortnight's illness; a long exile had destroyed his health, he no longer spoke, he hardly breathed; he was an ambulating corpse. In accepting authority he sacrificed the miserable remnant of his life, and yet he accepted it; he accepted from the majority of the Commune, to whose party he did not belong, but whom he overawed by the greatness of his past, an impossible part condemned before it was undertaken, and in which he was not supported. He fell behind a barricade, but he had already broken down beneath the burden of his task. His corpse was found disfigured by a fearful burn caused by a beam fallen from a neighbouring house. The victors found words with which to insult his death.

May 28, 11½ P.M.

CLUSERET was tall, about forty-four years of age, with a white skin, black hair and beard, and a coarsely handsome face. He must have been rather a favourite with women. He had the fluency of a journalist, and knew how to introduce misplaced declarations of principles. His handwriting was very clear, his style much less so, which gives the lie to those analysers who pretend to judge the man by his handwriting. Cluseret's character was especially wanting in clearness and his mind in decision. He appears to have possessed neither fixed principles, deep knowledge, nor sound experience. He was, perhaps, a good and intelligent captain of infantry; perhaps the chances of his life after leaving the French army may have weakened his character without enlightening his mind. Distinguished as a youth, he was second-rate as a man. His career as a general in the United States is of a very doubtful nature; he had served there but a short time, and that in a corps thought but

little of, both for its conduct and military worth: the choice of that leader injured the Commune in the estimation of the whole United States. As war delegate he neither knew how to will, nor how to persist in the attainment of what he had willed; he could not submit to the secondary part imposed upon him by the want of intelligence of the Commune, nor did he know how to shake it off. At the beginning he appeared anxious to secure the mastery; he was once even prepared to stake everything on a single cast; but seeing that he was about to lose, he skilfully withdrew. From that moment forward he wore to shreds his ministerial position, he perhaps even made a profit out of it. He had his own agents, who were concerned neither with politics nor with warfare, but with contracts, and through the hands of whom passed more than 24,000*l.* Those agents have disappeared since his arrest.

Cluseret was brave under fire. He never once put on his uniform; he marched in front in a round hat and jacket, and was followed.

When he led a garrison back to Fort Issy, an officer was seriously burnt beside him by a petroleum shell.

He had no idea of choosing men; all those he favoured were perfect mediocrities. Rosselli, his chief Engineer officer, and Mayer were the most disastrously so of them all. The measures he took were completely disconnected, and as void of reason as of the means of execution; besides which he was apt to reconsider a measure after it was taken. In one word, he was beneath his situation. What man can answer for himself under the same circumstances? Cluseret had moments of energy, but no will. After having entered upon the struggle against the Commune and having been worsted, he should have retired. He was no true revolutionist; he was but a superficial Frenchman with a Yankee tinge, and one who, of the whole Yankee philosophy, had understood but little beyond the word 'dollar.'

May 28, 11½ P.M.

COLONEL LEPERCHE, who was wounded before Fort Issy, was, from certain points of view, a distinguished officer. He began brilliantly at the schools, but I hold him incapable of leading forty sharpshooters—indeed he proved so. He was attached to the staff of Bourbaki, who thought much of him; he found his general again at Lille, and was made a lieutenant-colonel by him.

The summons sent by him to Fort Issy was quite out of place, and the action as well as the man deserved the sharp answer Colonel Rossel sent him. So extreme a summons was premature, for Leperche was certainly not in the position to shoot the garrison after a quarter of an hour. He had proof of it himself in an *argumentum ad hominem*, for two days afterwards he was wounded in the trenches before the fort. At that stage of the attack his message must be looked upon as a stratagem or as an attempt at intimidation; and either of the two justified Colonel Rossel's answer, the justice of which was

not understood, but which was highly successful in a humorous point of view. The *Gazette de France* remarked spitefully that the laws of war do not authorise the shooting of truce-bearers. The good old lady was mistaken. The flag of truce can only be kept sacred, if the abusive purposes it may be turned to by the Leperches are severely punished.

Lullier, they say, has been shot, but there is hardly an insurrectionary leader of whom the same has not been said. He is supposed to have been taken as he was firing at the soldiers through a skylight. Lullier was perhaps the only man in Paris who could have turned the flotilla to account; unfortunately his physical and moral health were too deeply affected by drink for one to repeat the unfortunate experience of his faculties made by the Central Committee. It appears that even a moderate use of liquors brought on furious excitement. In repose and even when observed his look had a momentary wildness. He violently desired the command of the seventeen gunboats possessed by the Com-

mune, and explained with a real superiority the purposes to which they might be turned. Rossel, who was then head of the staff, might perhaps have been rash enough to gratify this lucid fancy; but Cluseret affected to be guided by Delescluze and Pyat, who trembled at the very notion of employing Lullier. The unfortunate man pursued that hope with all the tenacity of a madman. When he was obliged to give it up, he wrote against the management of the war delegate some articles which were not wanting in truth.

The Government of the French Revolution was from beginning to end a kind of Council of Ten. The Central Committee, and later the Commune, were conscious of their shameful inferiority; if they did not publish the report of their stormy meetings, which could hardly be called deliberations, it was not systematically, but through a just sense of shame. The discussions were carried on, the mind of that sovereign Assembly was enlightened by a process for which there is no name in the dictionary; but if the

party who governed Paris for two months were to recover their authority, it would be absolutely necessary to introduce the word 'slanging' into the language of parliamentary reports.

Paris, so to speak, has no need of that complete and vast system of publicity, which seems one of the necessities of existence for a free nation. Paris is intelligent enough to guess what is not told to her, to rectify that which is half hidden from her. Like a man accustomed to live in darkness and to distinguish the real shape of things by the sense of touch, Paris has mysterious organs which enable her to read between the lines of her emasculated newspapers, which lead her to guess the meaning of silence and scent a false piece of news. Take it for all in all, however, publicity is better, especially for the Government, which has never yet chosen to understand that the truth, whatever it may be, will be less injurious than the interpretations of its silence.

Colonel Rossel was perhaps the only revolutionist who had any notion of the power of the

press, and sought to turn it to account. He received journalists with a degree of consideration proportioned to the circulation of their newspaper, and did not hesitate about placing in their hands authentic documents concerning the most recent events. His relations with the *Père Duchêne* originated from the reciprocal need of information on the one part, and of publicity on the other. Community of views and frankness of demeanour and behaviour led to reciprocal confidence, and a kind of familiarity. The Commandant * * * reproached Rossel one day with the eagerness with which he received that 'scoundrel' Père Duchêne at any hour he chose to call. 'Sixty thousand copies,' answered Rossel; and the reason was as unanswerable as the 'without dowry' of the *Avare*.

This intimacy might, besides, have had useful results for the Revolution. The first time that Eugène Vermersch came to the Ministry, Rossel spoke to him energetically on the necessity of making the sittings of the Commune public. Vermersch instantly caught at an idea; and his pungent wit expressed it with a surprising lustre and

brilliancy. By a rapid operation of his mind he showed you your own ideas transformed into fireworks sparkling with rockets and catherine-wheels, and studded with those flourishes which the Academy and good society forbid, and which furnished so much 'copy' to the *Père Duchêne*. Three days after that interview the Commune granted the publication of analytical reports of its sittings—which publication was not, however, a faithful one.

The *Père Duchêne* and the *Avant Garde* of Jules Vallés had the most readers of all the Parisian newspapers. The *Mot d'Ordre* was the best newspaper. The *Avant Garde* belonged to the Jacobins, who led and lost the Revolution.

Rochefort and Père Duchêne were, on the contrary, the adversaries of that party, which explains their spontaneous understanding with Colonel Rossel. Rossel and the editors of the *Mot d'Ordre* never met; but tacit and natural exchanges of services and politenesses—prolonged, on the side of the *Mot d'Ordre*, after the fall of Rossel—took place between them.

The bad language with which Père Duchêne dressed up his wares to catch the public taste was a simple side-dish. Twenty days ago an amiable woman who read the *Père Duchêne*—then a happy woman, now an unfortunate widow—I mean Madame Dombrowski, observed to me, that after erasing from the pages of that strange journal the flowers of style with which it was decorated, there remained a language which had something eloquent in it sometimes, and sometimes something touching.

The French have always loved the rim of the cup from which they drank truth to be slightly lubricated. Why should the process which served Rabelais against the *papegaux*, and Voltaire against the bigots, be considered out of place against the prigs of our own times? Why should it now be looked upon as illegitimate?

Père Duchêne has something more serious on his conscience than all his bad language and obscenity. Once, in the rather wild activity of the manufacture of his newspaper, an accusation slipped in, which borrowed from the language in

which it was couched an energy and a violence which insured its success. Gustave Chaudey, an editor of the *Siècle*, accused of having fired upon the people on the 22d of January, was arrested and imprisoned. There was a storm in the press, and another private storm under the cap which covered the triple head of the *Père Duchêne;* for the accusation had been introduced without the knowledge of Vermersch and another of his fellow-labourers. Being caught in the fact, however, Père Duchêne capitulated with his conscience, and prided himself upon the accusation he would have wished to erase. Gustave Chaudey was shot at the same time with the most prominent prisoners of the Commune.

If anything could save the Revolution, keep up the revolutionary agitation, and purify and preserve it from error, it was liberty of the press, and the organisation of publicity. It had no disadvantages from a military point of view; for anything that could be said of the military operations of the Commune could only magnify them: through the mirage of journalism its hordes would

become battalions and corps-d'armées, its agitation would look like activity, and the hazards it ran like well-considered undertakings. Everything would become great and appear formidable. Liberty of the press would have been an excellent speculation.

In a political point of view, liberty of the press would have served as an outlet for ill-humour. It would also have been a moderator; and that inexperienced Government needed it more than any other; for it had nothing of the sort. No institution had survived the Revolution of March 18th; but the press is an institution which has every interest in being enlightened, and which may be seduced and turned to bad purposes if it be limited.

With a free press and an active money-market the Government is more enlightened than by the remonstrances of a parliament of legists, or the labours of a council of state. The press is a parliament and a council of state which cost nothing; and the rates of the market are more instructive than the best police-report.

Colonel Rossel, who thought a great deal more than he acted—which was a great mistake—observed, after having sounded the incompetence of the men who surrounded him: 'I will make the people my staff.' He was for doing everything through the medium of the press. Time, or the will, failed him. Besides which, he was always badly seconded by the *Journal Officiel.*

The *Journal Officiel* of the Commune was venal, in all respects an unfaithful servant; it was inaccurate, and not intelligent.

The *Mot d'Ordre* was a powerful newspaper to carry on a struggle. Rochefort lavished on it that bitter wit, those cutting words, that humour which gives to common sense the appearance of a paradox, which make him one of the first polemical writers of the day. He was also a servant of the Revolution, and an enemy of the Commune.

In speaking of the power of the press, it is necessary to draw distinctions. A journal is an echo, and not under all circumstances a support. A real newspaper, which lives by its publicity, is

constrained to follow the evolutions of its readers, the evolutions of the public mind. It may, therefore, leave unsustained, at a critical moment, the public man who forestalls or braves opinion.

Nobody was ready: not one of the servants of the Commune had studied his part for the great stage; want of study, want of talent, want of decision, and want of lasting boldness. When a burglar wishes to break into a house, he first walks round it, studies its doors and its locks; he knows where the cupboards are, and how to force them open. The Commune is like the novice-burglar, who is obliged to kill in order to steal, and who finds himself afterwards oppressed by useless crimes; for he knows not where the hiding-places and secret drawers are.

This comparison takes my fancy, and I stick to it. Paris, in the hands of those savages, was like a strong-box with a secret lock. The house was broken into, the people waited under the windows; and the Commune, scratching its head before the bulky strong-box which contained the social wealth, was obliged to put up with the cop-

per coin; but, for the satisfaction of its conscience, it set fire to the house before leaving it.

Some Anecdotes concerning the Taking of Paris.

AT the Strasbourg terminus, a woman was brought in by an artilleryman, and accused of firing the cannons. She was a tall handsome woman, neatly dressed—a working woman, not a drab. Led before an officer, she was made over to two corporals—one of whom was half drunk—who pushed her towards the guard-house; and there, after she had entered, they killed her, without any warning, by a gun-shot from behind. Her corpse served as a subject of ridicule for the soldiers, until one of the railway officials had it covered over.

In the same quarter, during the struggle, there was a scamp of fifteen who fired out of the windows at the troops. Every one of his shots told. He hoisted a red flag at the window of which he made his head-quarters, and removed it with him when he changed his window.

The summary executions have nearly ceased. They say that we are indebted to General Ladmirault for that order. He is said to have threatened to shoot any officer who acted without his orders. The fact is, there was a moment when every one's life was at the mercy of a sergeant's whim.

The regular executions take place after a summary examination before a military court. If sentence is passed, the forms observed in carrying it out are nearly similar to those of what history calls the September Massacres of 1792.

An avowal which might be made use of for the defence of the vanquished is to be found in a despatch of Thiers to the provinces, dated May 27th, 7.15 P.M.: 'Commandant Ségoyer, of the 26th Foot Chasseurs, having advanced too far, was taken by the wretches who defended the Bastille and shot immediately, without any respect for the laws of war.'

Delescluze *sought for death* when the barricade he was in was abandoned. He was shot through the heart.

The *Temps* of May 30th contains preciou

formation as to the taking of Paris. On the evening of Sunday 21st, the corps of Generals Douay, De Cissey, and Vinoy were at Paris. The Trocadéro was carried during the night, as well as the Arc de Triomphe, at the same time with the 15th district. On the 22d, in the morning, De Cissey occupied the Champ de Mars, and marched upon the Pantheon. On the right bank, Vinoy's corps rested on the Seine; then came Douay's; and Clinchant's formed the extreme left. Tuesday 23d, the barracks of the Pépinière and the St. Lazare terminus, Monceau and the Batignolles, were carried. At the same time that one army was penetrating inwards, Montandon's division was advancing in the neutral zone by St. Ouen. On the 23d, Ladmirault occupied the Northern terminus; and the mayoralty of the 18th district was likewise taken.

The Commune, in taking up arms, obliged France to remain armed. Ladmirault, De Cissey, and Du Barrail have been advanced to high commands; *the eyes of the sincere friends of the country have been long fixed on those officers.* No less than

two revolutions and the pressing wants of the siege of Paris were needed for General Fournier to play a military part. The vanquished armies of 1870 would never otherwise have borne the promotion of that man of science and energy. In all probability it was he who took Paris.

Amongst the leaders of the corps d'armée of the civil war, there is only * * * who has given proofs of notorious incapacity. Let the above names be compared with those of the army of Metz.

The soldiers have not improved; they have been encouraged by the hope of an early deliverance; a feeling which loosens all the bonds of an army, and destroys beforehand all mutual confidence and emulation. The officers fought, but their victory over an ignorant enemy cannot be expected to have added much to their knowledge. Two months of defeat before the Prussians would have been of more avail than two months of success against the Commune.

In promising to the soldiers their deliverance after the fall of Paris, the reactionists have served the cause of liberty.

Here are some notes giving an idea of the spirit of the repressive measures practised by the reactionists against the partisans of the Commune. They are taken from the *Petite Presse* of May 31st.

'Yesterday a long stream of blood might have been seen following the course of the Seine, and passing under the last arch of the bridge near the Tuileries. This stream was running continuously.'

Under the title the 'Furies,' the same newspaper publishes the following statement: '*Rue de Bretagne.*—A woman was passing near a group of soldiers; she began to address them in violent language, callling them assassins. An officer in command of the detachment drew his sword and slashed the vixen's face; she was finished off by bayonet wounds.'

One should read the Paris *Journal's* account of Dereure's execution. It is frightfully free and easy.

The officers find pleasure in playing a part in these murders; military regulations have, however, carefully forbidden them an active share in

executions. Now an officer finishes off an executed man, and then another blows out a fugitive's brains; but the most distinguished is certainly the one who slashes a woman's face for insulting him. The newspapers relate all this without anger—I am wrong—with a bitter anger against the victims.

'A military court is established in the Châtelet theatre in the public waiting-room. It is presided over by a lieutenant-colonel. Persons recognised as guilty and condemned to death are taken to the Lobau barracks, behind the Hôtel de Ville, under the escort of a detachment of the 10th Foot Chasseurs. The shooting-parties await the condemned in the barrack court, and justice is done as soon as they enter.'

The following is a farther extract from the *Journal de Paris*, which appeared in several papers: 'The following was the mode of procedure of a military court held at the Luxembourg and presided over by a superior officer of gendarmerie. The accused underwent a summary examination, after which the president pronounced judgment.

If he were declared *ordinary*, he was taken back to prison and thence sent off to Satory; if, on the contrary, he were declared to be *classed*, he was led into an adjoining room, and was allowed a short interview with a priest before he was executed.'

Jules Favre's circular concerning extradition is worthy of a government of madmen, as is also the bloody system of repression they have adopted. The proceedings of the Commune with regard to the hostages and the monuments were war measures, extreme but regular. The burning of the Louvre appears much less scandalous to me than the burning of Bazeilles; and yet M. Jules Favre would hardly think, on account of that occurrence, of asking for the extradition of the Emperor William. The demand of extradition is not based upon a right; to refuse a political character to the insurrection of Paris is a sophism none but our illustrious rhetorician would have cared to risk.

'We are assured,' says the *Siècle* of May 30th, 'that summary executions ceased this morning, except in the case of members of the Commune,

incendiaries, and soldiers taken in the insurgent ranks.' Why this exception in favour of members of the Commune? I am far from setting up as their apologist, having always been their adversary; but how are you to judge of the character of an insurrection if you shoot, as a first measure, those who were chiefly responsible for it? Valin, Jourde,* and Rigault are put to death, and Assi, Eudes, and others, notorious for their insignificance, are preserved. If Europe is to judge of the insurrection by the answers of Mégy and Assi before a military court, the Commune will be looked upon as an assembly of desperate imbeciles. The Versailles Government makes use of the 'chassepot' to suppress the testimony most essential for throwing light on the subject of dispute.

M. Beslay, or Citizen Beslay, a member of the Commune, saved the Bank, where he commanded for the Commune, from the hands of the incen-

* The date of these words, written, so to say, in the midst of the *mêlée*, explains errors as to the fate of the persons mentioned. J. A.

diaries. Will he be shot without a trial? His example shows that there may be Communists of very different stamps and varied kinds. If every one is impartially shot without discussion, if the most intelligent men of the Commune are put to death, and a few samples chosen from amongst the most depressed skulls are preserved for the sake of a good trial, the repression will no longer be a work of justice, but a party measure.

Avoine *fils* has been shot at Belleville; he was one of the few theorists of socialism.

The Paris Guard has been reëntering Paris since the 28th. That is an imprudence on the part of the victors, who show no consideration. It was easy to organise under the uniform of the line, infantry, or cavalry, some chosen corps who might usefully have been substituted for the former Guard. If it were possible to kill the insurrection, it might have been opportune to bring back that detested uniform; but such a movement cannot be slain, though it may be beheaded, 'in spite of the stream of blood which runs continuously into the Seine.'

Notes and Thoughts.

FOR a moment it was possible to believe in the Commune—that was on the first day of its existence. One only desired to think it capable, honest, and intrepid, and to follow and obey it.

The Central Committee, which has the credit of having made the insurrection, and which governed for a week, was so profoundly incapable, that it was a real relief when the Commune was elected on the 28th of March. The Committee, after some reluctance, made over its powers in a pompous ceremony to the new Assembly; but it had no intention of abdicating on that account. It established itself at the Hôtel de Ville, where it indulged in orgies instead of decrees. 'They spend 4000*l.* a day,' said M. * * * with disgust, about the 30th of March.

The Internationals were not bad people; so far as I could judge, they were the best men in the Revolution. Gérardin, Malon, and Avrial are those I saw the most of. They were very honest fellows, who were devoted to the public cause, and to whom a firm will and a sure doctrine were alone wanting.

I can't say as much for the Blanquists. I have not the honour of being acquainted with Blanqui, but I consider him a very capable and a very energetic man. But, owing either to a peculiar tendency of his character or the necessity of the moment, he surrounded himself only with incompetent men, unworthy servants of liberty, and narrow and selfish minds, capable of a sudden stroke, but incapable of courage.

I can't help bearing him a grudge for having raised pedestals to those ignoble beings, and for having held them up to the admiration of credulous crowds, who are not yet undeceived, perhaps.

That is why I bear Blanqui a grudge. Why

have they chosen out from amongst the millions who aspired to a more perfect freedom, men of such narrow minds, and of such undignified characters? I won't believe the working population of Paris does not number more generous hearts and more open minds than those people. If Blanqui had the gift of inspiring men with a spirit of self-devotion, and of employing them, why did he not constitute himself a staff of worthy men, instead of the Bergerets, Eudes and Mégys?

Raoul Rigault and his acolytes shot a Gallican prelate and a Liberal senator; and they destroyed the archives of civilised society. What more could they have done, if they had wished to serve the Ultramontane party? They would have set fire to a church *not to make the trick too common.*

Well-to-do people won't believe that the work-

men have any difficulty in getting a livelihood. But it is not a bare livelihood they lay a claim to; they ask (and they are right in so doing) that it may be easier for them to achieve well-being and riches.

It is said that if the workmen had fewer failings and more instruction, it would be easier for them to attain to well-being. They may reverse the argument, and say, 'If it were easier for us to achieve well-being, we should have, or at least our children would have, fewer failings and more instruction.

The workman has enough for his food. 'True,' I answer; 'but he must also have enough to feed his caprices and passions, since you, the aristocrats of industry, finance, and politics—you nourish your own so richly and so amply in the broad daylight of Paris.'

When the enlightened *bourgeoisie* made the Revolution of 1789, it did not make it alone. It called in the peasant to burn the castles, and the workman to overthrow the bastilles. The labourer performed his work; he now demands his hire.

Accomplices of the Revolution, share its profits with him!

The workman, called a socialist, a Communist, or a member of the International Society, knows perfectly what he wants, but he does not know how to obtain it.

He wants it to be made easier for the working man to acquire property.

He doesn't want every one to be poor; he wants every one to be rich. But rather than submit to too crushing an inequality, the workman, and especially the Paris workman, who sees very well how the world goes, would prefer to blow up society.

What have the governing classes of French society done in favour of the poor? What have they done in order to lighten the taxes for those who earn less, and to give every one a tolerably equal share in the immense development of public wealth?

The French Chambers have been profoundly

selfish. They have constantly favoured their relations, their friends, and their *equals*. They have never borne the strain of the law of conscription; they have made the indirect taxes bear upon necessaries, and have given privileges to the great manufacturing interest in the distribution of direct taxation.

You don't understand why revolutions are made. Read the few lines which show the proceeds of the different branches of the revenue, and you will see how the legislator strikes at the necessaries of the one class, and spares the superfluities of the other.

When bees find a dead rat in their hive, as they cannot remove the corpse, they embalm it with wax.

The English have a social system which *produces* a great number of paupers, but that system has a remedy of its own. The pauper is taken, glued up in a workhouse, or some other system of

benevolence, and he ceases to stink in the nostrils of society.

The French legislators have shown less prudence. Their social system produces less human detritus than the English one, and yet society is more infected by it. You see myriads of consumptive and stunted men, who some fine morning take up a musket, and send their complaints, loaded with ball, through the windows, and sometimes through the heads, of happy and healthy people.

'Tis a detestable system, and yet no one seems to weary of it. It has lasted eighty years, and the future is full of similar promises.

We have agreed that the men of order monopolise civic virtues and even courage. It must, however, be admitted that the men of disorder are numerous, and cannot all be killed.

What is to be done?

If I held the place of the men of order, I

should reflect seriously. I should remember that the riots during Louis Philippe's reign were insignificant, that the days of June amounted to a disaster, and that the affair of the Commune was a revolution.

If I held the place of the men of order, this crescendo would furnish me with subject for thought.

Amongst the battalions which I had the honour of commanding, some were painful to look at. Weak, ugly, small, and deformed men, whose uniform only showed off their bad appearance. As I passed before those unfortunates, I said to myself, 'These people have good reason for fighting; they fight that their children may be less puny, less scrofulous, and less full of failings than themselves.'

In spite of the defeat of the Commune, the dilemma which the Communists put to society remains entirely unanswered. 'Either society

must condescend to find means to make our lives convenient and easy, or we shall destroy society.'

You see clearly, imbecile legislators, that you must throw the portals of society wide open to the horde which is besieging it. If not, that horde will make for itself a society outside of yours. If the nations do not open their doors to the working classes, the working classes will fly to the International.

There is a numerous class of society which is industrious and powerful, because it is homogeneous, to which do not apply your laws concerning property, concerning inheritance, and concerning the family.

Change your laws, or else that class will try obstinately to create a society for itself, in which there will be neither family, nor inheritance, nor property.

It seems to me that I have no prejudice in favour of the Communists; and yet I must say that I prefer, in spite of all the shame of the

Commune—I prefer to have fought with those vanquished ones, rather than with these victors.

What is called the Conservative class is unworthy and incapable of governing, because its principal motive is fear.

Whatever you please, excepting danger; such is the political faith of the 'friends of order.'

There were in Paris on the 18th of March (this is an account for the accuracy of which I can vouch) sixty revolutionary battalions, and ninety entirely Conservative battalions. The remainder were divided, and incapable of exerting a decisive action.

The ninety Conservative battalions were of older standing, better equipped, and better armed than the revolutionists; they were equally numerous, better commanded, and better disciplined.

But those unworthy citizens are accustomed to trust entirely to the army and to the police, whose

duty it is to get killed for the cause of order. But there are moments when the police is worn out, and when the army does not clearly understand on which side its duty lies, or whether it be not its duty to remain quiet. At those moments the streets of Paris are at the mercy of the first comer.

I shall never regret having tried to demolish that bastard oligarchy, the French *bourgeoisie*. We may have been beaten, but nevertheless our cannon-shots have told; and I hope that the cause of democracy may find, at some future period, less unworthy and less incapable servants than ourselves.

Undoubtedly I was duped by the movement of the 8th of March; but I was much more duped at Metz, when I constructed works which were never to be attacked; when I put new gates to the town—gates which were destined to be thrown wide open. All the money which I spent there was spent for the King of Prussia.* I was also

* Punning on the French proverbial expression which is used to express the idea that something has been done fruitlessly.

duped at Nevers, when I wore myself out in exercising soldiers and forming officers to defend a country which did not wish to defend itself. If I had been aware that all that was humbug, and would end by a good capitulation, I would have gone and spent my time with some corps of free-shooters, instead of teasing the life out of those poor mobilised devils whom I ended by transforming into soldiers.

If I had my free choice again, it is possible that I should not go and serve the Commune, but it is certain that I should not serve Versailles.

I confess that I thought myself thoroughly done when I came to know the Revolutionary Government.

I was in search of patriots, and I found folks who would have given the forts over to the Prussians, rather than surrender to the Assembly. I was in search of liberty, and I found privileges established at every street-corner. I was in search of equality, and I found the complicated hierarchy

of the Federation, the aristocracy of the old political prisoners, and the feudal system of stupid officials, who trammelled all the living strength of Paris.

But it was something different from all that that most surprised me. We had suffered from the reign of a police-government; and the Commune managed to be a police-government; and Raoul Rigault, a sufferer by that form of government, establishes himself at the Prefecture of Police, and becomes the real head of the Commune.

I have known Delescluze and Félix Pyat. I never sufficiently esteemed Delescluze; and I never shall sufficiently despise Félix Pyat.

There is one point on which I consider the Commune as a complete experiment, that is, the incompetence of the working classes for government. It is necessary—it is *necessary* that, until things are changed, the exercise of the functions

of government should remain in the hands of the instructed classes, or, rather, it is necessary that the government should remain in the hands of the *bourgeoisie*, until the working classes are possessed of sufficient instruction.

Let the people then acquire instruction, if they wish to have their legitimate share in the conduct of business and the distribution of fortunes. But, for the present—I will speak the word without mincing it—the people are too stupid to govern us. They have not sufficient sound ideas, and they have too many false ideas.

I am not accusing; I am stating a fact. I know that it is not the fault of the people, but of our legislators, if the people remain in this inferior position; I know that the French people — and those of Paris in particular — are intelligent and clever. But all that does not suffice; for the treatment of such serious questions as the management of political affairs, a deep and sound intellectual culture is necessary. The present Government is incompetent, faulty, and faithless. I know it well; for I have striven most heartily to

overthrow it. But I must say that the people of Paris, after having got rid of their government, had the appearance of a blind man deprived of his dog.

Not only is the instruction of our workmen insufficient—it is also ill-directed. They study with good faith the works of those philosophical day-dreamers who promise them a paradise upon earth. That's a mere loss of time. They are desirous of suddenly transforming the organisation of labour; of getting rid of the masters, and of suppressing the intermediate class; but they are not strong enough to replace the masters and the go-betweens, and three-fourths of the time are the dupes of their innovating experiments.

Incapable of improving the management of their own affairs, they are still more incapable of managing public affairs. I did all I could, when I served the Revolution, to find amongst the working classes, or amongst the small tradesmen who were partisans of the Revolution, men capable of commanding or administering; I did, I repeat it, all I could. Well, then, I formally declare that

I only found capable auxiliaries in the instructed classes.

There is no occasion to discuss whether aristocracy as a political system is superior or inferior to democracy. It is sufficient to prove that France is now under a democracy; that there are no solid aristocratic elements in the country; and that, willingly or unwillingly, we must avail ourselves of the democratic system.

The stumbling-block of democracy has always been despotism. When Roman liberty perished, the aristocrats were found to have been its defenders. The Catos and the Brutuses, whom our democratic republicans select nowadays for their models, were the last champions of the old Roman constitution. Against whom? Against the 'plebs' led by the Mariuses and Cæsars.

There is nothing less rational than the idea of a constituent assembly as we understand it in

France. Imagine to yourself an assembly of physicians seated at the patient's bedside, and discussing whether his temperament shall be bilious or sanguine, or ordaining that henceforward it shall be nervous or lymphatic!

There is one thing about which our Governments have all agreed, and concerning which they have pursued their work with a unity of spirit vainly to be sought for elsewhere: I refer to the suppression of all political intermediate groups between the citizen and the state. The editors of the last law on the *conseils-généraux* were as determined on that point as Louis XIV. or the Convention could ever have been.

It is probable that political prosperity cannot be established without a certain autonomy of the towns and provinces.

The *Tiers Etat* asked in 1614 that there should no longer be more than twelve governors of provinces.

The departments are administrative circumcriptions, which correspond neither with the geographical distribution nor with the ancient provinces. Besides which, the military circumscriptions do not correspond with those of the courts of appeal, nor those last with the archiepiscopal circumscriptions.

From this point of view, the revolutionists continued Louis XI. and Louis XIV. They have annulled and rendered impossible all political grouping within the state.

Their system, conceived to make head against civil and foreign foes, proved very efficient for depriving the rebels of all support, and for concentrating the national forces in the hands of Government. But this accession of strength on the part of the Government is one of the causes of the political poverty of the country.

France can easily be divided into from twelve to fifteen natural circumscriptions or provinces, each of which would comprise from four to nine departments.

Those provinces would correspond in extent

and population with the natural agglomerations spread all over the surface of Europe, with the states of Spain, and with the European states of the third order—such as Switzerland, Belgium, and Holland. They would answer to the ancient French provinces wherever they were formerly constituted.

It is probable that the department, which must serve as the basis of a similar modification, would disappear in certain provinces, or at least leave the first place to the arrondissement or district. In other parts of the country, the department would remain as the natural medium between the province and the canton. The canton is perhaps one of the most strongly constituted elements in the political geography of France.

This transformation would be much more simple to carry out than it appears, if the government were at any time in the hands of men sufficiently resolute not to confound the public interest with the interests of officials desirous of retaining their posts.

The legislative and judicial power may undergo interruptions; but the executive power may not. It must neither have sessions nor vacations; it must be prepared for every event.

The false notions of public sovereignty which obtain amongst us, prevent us from seeing the immense disadvantages of impeding the executive power, either by ill-understood revolutions, or by confiding it to the hands of an assembly. This error is not confined to the revolutionary party alone; and the Assembly of Versailles very often reminds me of the Commune in this respect.

For instance, it confides the control of the executive power to a commission, and the right of pardon to a commission. Those are either superfluities or impediments: either the executive power will act alone, or else business will suffer. Can Ferré, who for two months has been awaiting a 'solution,' be put to death without cruelty at the end of those two months?

There are affairs which must receive an immediate solution, either a good or a bad one, otherwise a temporary system is established, the ulti-

mate rupture of which, even for a good solution, is injurious, because it gives a shock to the social organisation. I have taken the example of a man condemned to death, because it has a special interest for me at the present moment. Law, custom, and humanity demand that a sentence of death should be carried out without delay. If you carry it out after two months, you violate the law, you offend humanity. If you do not carry it out for the sole reason that two months have elapsed, you enervate, you ruin the law—which, it is true, is open to discussion — which institutes capital punishment.

Nothing shows a weak society so much as this systematic indifference and this division of responsibilities. An individual possessing only a tenth, a hundredth, or a thousandth part (as is the case in an assembly of more than 500 members) of influence in the solution of a debated question, will form an opinion upon grounds ten, one hundred, or one thousand times less conclusive than if he had the whole responsibility.

The malady of democracies is the division of

responsibility. Under that system, nothing but what is petty can be carried out. Observe, however, that this malady does not form an *inherent* part of the democratic system, but is only one of its tendencies. Observe, also, that this tendency is excessively favourable to petty despotism and gross peculation.

What would well-thinking people in France say, if they knew that the affair of the Commune had, according to my conviction, been nothing more than a skirmish of outposts?

I can speak on the subject with full knowledge. Behind the wild zealots and madcaps of the Commune, I caught sight of formidable theorists, of vigorous and resolute men of action, who looked on without joining in the combat, either because the struggle had been clumsily entered upon, or else because, according to their taste, the fruit was not yet ripe enough to be gathered.

God grant that, without its coming to a strug-

gle, society may make the necessary concessions to the lower classes!

The Spanish Government is taking steps against the International Society. The Spanish Government must be in a very bad way. When you take to seeing ghosts and to fearing them, there must be something wrong with your head.

The Commune burnt everything; the idea would have had some reason in it, if that course had been taken on the 18th of March, to announce a deliberate purpose of erasing and destroying the past. As a beginning, it would have been a master-stroke from the point of view of the more frantic innovators; as an act of despair it was a piece of roguery.

After seeing the success of the sailors, and especially of the general officers of the navy, once ashore, one is tempted to inquire why Trochu, Vinoy, and others of our land generals did not

go and serve in the fleet? Our navy might then have achieved something, and certainly the defence of our territory would not have been injuriously affected.

Rossel must have very stubborn convictions and a very wild imagination to have fancied that the Commune would make war upon the Prussians. Such is the opinion of those who foresee events after they have occurred; and they are perfectly right, since the Commune did not make war upon the Prussians. But the judgment of those who will go back to the 18th of March may be different. On the 18th of March I had no country left; France had given way beneath our feet: all courage, patriotism, and honour had vanished. On the 19th of March I learn that a town has taken up arms, and I cling desperately to that fragment of my country. The insurgents were unknown to me, but I knew against whom they were arrayed, and that sufficed for me.*

* See the letter of March 19, to the Minister of War.

That the Commune (there was no Commune on the 18th of March, but only a revolution) should not have declared war against the Prussians is not astonishing. But it is certain that the moment the Revolution had a chance of success, Prussia would have declared war against it.

Re-read the manifesto of Brunswick in 1792. It might have been placed almost untouched in the mouth of M. Thiers on the 1st of May. I have never mentioned this analogy, but I have often thought of it.

On a Vignette by Gustave Doré.

October 9, 1871.

DON QUIXOTE is seated at the table of an inn. He has laid down his arms for a moment, but he has not laid down with them his thoughts and his mission. Grave, with head erect, overawing his audience, he has entered upon one of those discourses in which his knowledge and his logic, but above all his goodness, shine forth with

brilliant light. A deep wrinkle furrows his brow: for a long time ere he furbished his armour, for a long time ere he entered upon his wanderings, he had suffered for all the injustices and sorrow he had met with in the world of his books; for a long time he had pondered over all that sorrow and injustice,—thence the wrinkles on his brow. And now he has entered upon his task, and his adventures have commenced, and that evening, the day having by chance ended with supper, he is relating to the haphazard guests collected round the table his thoughts, his system of morality, and the wondrous examples he has met with in his books. Every one listens and no one laughs; some few are really attentive, and seek to remember or to understand; others are pensive, for they feel that there is some chord in their nature which vibrates as they listen to those tales of the world of folly and of goodness. Two damsels look a little startled; such grave language is new to them, and their precise sense of reality warns them that all those discourses are chimerical. A serving-man who is removing

the dishes barely turns round his head. As for the host, he is engaged in the study of the phenomenon; he stands there in his lusty obesity, with arms akimbo, gazing with inquisitive and distrustful eyes at the worthy knight. He is thinking, perhaps, that a man so rich in ideas is probably poor in doubloons; and he is seeking, perhaps, what interest guides a guest so different from all those whom he has seen in his inn.

Which is the madman, which the sage? The host has a bestial jowl, an enormous belly, and hanging cheeks; the knight a proud countenance, and a deep and somewhat sorrowful glance.

The one is occupied with his estate, and fills out his paunch; the other is occupied with the sufferings of the world, and seeks for wrongs to redress. The one serves his own interest, which he knows; the other serves the interest of his fellows, of which he is ignorant. Which is the madman and which the sage? What matters it? Arise, Don Quixote! those folks understand thee not. Come, don thine armour; let us issue forth together and encounter windmills.

The Convention held its ground against three-fourths of France in insurrection, at the same time that it carried on a foreign war. It was far easier to resist a single enemy who had only conquered one-third of France.

October 9th, 1871.

'Do you deem the Athenians so cowardly as to surrender because they have seen their country ravaged?' said Archidamus to the Lacædemonians. (*Thucydides*, book i.)

Sept. 1st. Man is a conscious phenomenon.

'A statesman,' says Henri Martin, with reference to Fouquet's trial,—'a statesman devoted to a great idea and strong in the purity of his intentions is often led away to too much laxity in the choice of means.'

To be as resolute in one's actions, once a decision has been come to, under urgent circumstances, as if the opinion in virtue of which one acts were certain to be right. (*Descartes.*)

*Timothy : a Folly.**

In those days every one was actively, not to say frantically, engaged in the election of a President for the Republic, which was to take place in a fortnight. The principal candidates were — M. Guizot for the Liberal-Conservative party, and M. Thiers for the Young-Liberal party; besides which, there were two Princes from each of the unemployed royal and imperial houses—the ones coming forward in the name of hereditary right, the others in the name of monarchical principles. All these candidates were distinguished for their frankly republican proclamations, protestations, and declarations; the elder branches even had a tendency to Socialism. Finally, amongst the candidates were to be found 128 generals, 233 bar-

* An especial interest will attach to this delicate political satire, when it is known that it was written in prison by Rossel on the 20th September, twelve days after he had been sentenced to death. J. A.

risters — of whom one was an orator — several patented pharmacists, and a very large number of citizens of all colours and all professions.

The whole country was in a state of fever, and had a feverish thirst. The wine-shops of Paris and the taverns of the smallest boroughs were driving a golden trade. Paris especially—Paris, the head and heart of France—was distinguished by the vivacity of her political anxiety. It was not only at the wine-counters that the presidential election was discussed. In the most aristocratic circles the election had replaced the game of *bouillotte;* stakes were laid on candidates as if they were race-horses. A special betting-book was opened; chances rose and fell capriciously; Thiers stock was sold out, and Gagne stock bought in; operations were carried on for fixed terms or for cash. It was the gambling-house, the Derby, and the stock-exchange combined into a game, all the more attractive in that it was more fanciful; for arrangements had been made to enable players to decide their bets without awaiting the event; and every evening fortunes were made and un-

made according to the variations in opinion. The middle classes did the thing less expensively: they went in for politics at the cafés or the beershops. Whole trainsful of beer from England, Lille, Strasbourg, and Munich reached the immense capital daily, and proved insufficient for appeasing the insatiable thirst of its numerous orators. At midnight, when masters and waiters, worn out by the day's fatigue, had turned out the discussing hordes, and managed to close doors and shutters, the debate continued on the pavement, by starlight; and the coming dawn discovered, stretched out upon the Boulevard benches, unconscious orators and solitary disputants, who even in sleep, disturbed by generous dreams, still argued in favour of their pet candidate.

'Twas a moment full of charm and delirium. Every one understood the Republic; every one loved liberty; and not a French citizen (save the unemployed Princes) would have exchanged his share of liberty for an empire.

One of the principal organs of the national public life—perhaps the principal organ; for it

penetrated into palaces and into cottages, into the chamber and the hospital—one of the most read and most appreciated newspapers, the celebrated *Petit Journal*, had then for its principal editor, who played the first part in every style, a writer of an easy and fertile talent, the illustrious Timothy Primm—who must not be mistaken either for Trimm, or for Grimm, or for the celebrated General Prim. Every one knew that the *Petit Journal* might have a serious influence. It had been questioned and sounded, but found impenetrable. Apparently indifferent to the great game which was about to be played, the *Petit Journal* kept proudly to its usual course, giving their daily mouthfuls to its hundred thousand readers, talking of the fine weather, of the rain, of roses and distributions of prizes; touching upon sentiment, science, morality, erudition, eloquence, and wit, all in a pleasant manner, easy to be taken in, even on a journey, very comfortable, and at no great cost. Thus, whilst every one in France was agitated, breathless, and overwhelmed by the great anxieties of the choice of a master, Timothy, free, airy, and

at his ease, continued sowing the flowers of his amiable rhetoric in his six daily columns. To the deuce with politics! he would seem to say to those indiscreet ones who sought to gain him over, or to convince him. But the candidates were distrustful; and people who plume themselves on their sharpness, and know how to explain the things they cannot understand, affirmed aloud that Timothy had his plan.

A fortnight before the election, the leader of the *Petit Journal* was headed as follows: 'Of Presidential Elections in Ancient Times.'

In ancient times! Why not? Has not a volume been written on the newspapers of ancient times? It is true that the ancient republics had no presidents; but in the hands of a skilful writer the most ungrateful elements undergo a transformation, 'like clay in the hands of the potter.'

Timothy most justly began with the Deluge:

'The patriarchs were presidents—presidents of purely patriarchal republics. They went from pasturage to pasturage, driving their flocks before them, sacrificing to God the Creator, and making

war upon hostile tribes. The only thing was, they were not elective; for they were hereditary.'

Timothy then cast a passing glance at Amasis' foot-bath, in which he saw an undoubted trace of popular intervention in the choice of the organs of public sovereignty. After which he piled up the Archons and Ephori, 'before whom kings rose from their seats.' Then the Suffetes, the Vergobreiths, and other Brummagem magistrates. Then he came to the consuls. This was his principal dish. Bouillet is not more learned. There were even touches which Bayle would not have disowned; and for good reasons.

Then, to omit nothing, he did not fail to mention the celebrated Don Sylvius, who was three times Roman consul. He jested airily about the candidate's name, and about the homely simplicity of the Romans, who were satisfied to attract the public attention by putting white upon their clothes. Such a trick would never have succeeded with the Athenians. They had less barbarous modes of setting up a candidate—such as cutting off the tail of one's dog, for instance.

Those Athenians never did anything like other people. They had a custom called ostracism, because the voting-ticket was an oyster-shell, on which the candidate's name was inscribed.

What a singular people!

Then they counted the voting-tickets — I mean the oyster-shells. They doubtless made use of oyster-women as counters. It is true that the Athens oyster-women were better up in politics than the statesmen of other countries. Take, for instance, the market-woman who criticised Theophrastes' language. Well, then, they counted the voting-tickets; and whoever obtained a majority —was exiled!

What a singular people!

People were candidates for transportation, just as at the present day they are candidates for the presidency; and it was equally honourable!

What a singular people!

This usage may perhaps have had a deeper meaning; for nothing is superficial in the customs of a great people. The Athenians perhaps intended by that symbol to remind their statesmen

of the fable of the oyster and the pleaders. They said to them: 'Power is an oyster of which we eat the flesh, and of which we give you the shells.'

Things are changed nowadays. Statesmen too often eat the oyster, and give the shells to the people.

The *Petit Journal* had, therefore, entered the arena. To speak truth, its article was rather a radical one; but it prejudged nothing, and excluded no one. Each candidate hoped that the popular paper would back his candidature. I have heard that Primm was offered from different quarters three hundred prefectures, twenty-two posts in the Cabinet, and eight embassies to St. Petersburg.

Timothy, who was already a diplomatist, listened to everything, refused nothing, and repulsed no one; but excused himself on the plea of its being absolutely necessary for him to write his daily article, which was entitled 'Presidential Elections in the Middle Ages.'

'The two halves of God, the Pope and the

Emperor,' were the subject of this second article. Timothy, however, did not lose his way amidst the philosophical considerations which might have seduced some minds; he only cast a faint light upon the fearful prospect of elections playing the principal part in the origin of modern society. Indulgent and even amiable towards the conclave, he surrounded the imperial elections with purple and with gold. Then he winged his way lightly to Scotland, where he seated himself on the famous stone used in the election of kings. On his return to France—and it was there that his digressions took the character of high immediate interest—he represented Robert the Strong as an elected chief, and gave to the symbolical applause that accompanied the consecration of the kings of France the character of a real election.

Poor Timothy! Between three stars and a dash he boldly decided the question of divine right. How many enemies that paragraph was about to make for him, and what remorse awaited him! A storm of threats replied to this crime, repeated in a hundred thousand copies.

Timothy paid no attention to them. His plans were made; and those plans, strange to say, he carried out. That very evening, at the Stupefied Club, an eccentric character bet for Timothy against all the candidates for the presidency. He was looked upon as mad; and his bets were taken.

'Presidential Elections in Modern Times' furnished provender the following day for the myriads of readers of the *Petit Journal.* This was a page of Tocqueville, chopped up fine, and seasoned with agreeable sallies of wit, whose principal merit consisted in their reference to the topics of the day.

But, truly, it would be an ungrateful task to attempt to analyse faithfully the fifteen articles which ran through the fifteen last days before the election.

When the twelfth day arrived, Timothy turned boldly round. 'A cottage and her heart'—such was his theme.

'Farewell to politics!' he said; 'farewell for ever! They divide minds; they harden hearts, and dry up the source of tender sympathies. That

which I seek is condemning myself to the crushing bondage of publicity; that which seduces me and carries me away, is the opportunity it affords me of unveiling myself to hearts which respond to my heart, and to souls in which my soul finds a sister spirit. A man of the fields and of nature, a blade of grass, a drop of water, suffice for my happiness; and that blade of grass, that drop of water, that honest, though perhaps simple, admiration, I only aspire to share with a hundred thousand hearts like my own.

'Alas, what a poor protection are the purest intentions against hatred and envy! Led away by the general feeling of the public to talk with my readers of that which excites every one's passions, I suffered myself to touch from afar off upon a political question. I spoke honestly and timidly; I said what my heart impelled me to say; and that heart they have calumniated. A thousand anonymous letters, a thousand threatening visits, have been my reward for a few words which were too sincere. I said that there were formerly elective monarchies. I said it because

I believed it. If that statement displeases you, there is an end of it. Ah, if it were but possible —perhaps it may soon be so—if it were but possible, far away from the deceitful world, in a cottage with green blinds, half hidden amidst foliage wet with dewdrops, to hide myself from every look save only one, to shut my heart against every heart save one alone—but that one a heart which would understand me!'

Timothy cooed out several variations of this theme, in which he demonstrated that he had never been a political man, that he had never busied himself with the affairs of his country; that, consequently, he could only have good intentions, but that those intentions had been maligned. He was esteemed and pitied.

He kept on in this style until the eighth day before the election. To borrow the politic expression of a man of the period, 'The fever was at its apogee.' Suddenly Timothy ceased his conversation about cottages, and headed his article, 'Politics and Government.'

In that article he showed clearly that a go-

vernment should never busy itself with politics; that politics have been the stumbling-block of every government; and that if the government, instead of busying itself with politics, looked after the affairs of the country, there would never be any revolutions, and everybody would be richer. What are politics good for, especially for a government? They are only good for breeding discontent. Honest folks keep aloof, and disreputable people come forward and make speeches. Would it not be better to busy oneself with the maintenance of friendly relations with neighbouring countries, and to make good commercial treaties which would allow every one to sell at high rates and buy at low, and to employ one's whole time in the administration of the country, in such a manner that the general profits should augment and the expenditure diminish? Would not an honest government, anxious for the welfare of the people, find enough to occupy its time in seeking that result, without busying itself with politics?

Let taxation be diminished, until the time

comes when it can be done away with altogether. Let railroads be made everywhere, and good macadamised roads where there are to be no railroads; and telegraphs and post-offices, and tobacco-shops* and theatres, and hospitals and boulevards, and fountains and cattle-troughs, and everything that every one needs. And when all that is done, then you may lose what time is left in politics.

But in the mean while, what is necessary for our Government is not political men. They only serve to muddle our business. What we need is a government of worthy folks who love the people, who know them and understand their wants. There is no need of law-quibbling and politics for that.

The following day, Timothy received several disinterested and sincere letters, inquiring why he should not himself come forward as a candidate for the presidency. He refrained from publishing those letters, and from replying to their hints;

* The management of which in France is confided to an official in government pay.

but he insinuated with a shade of sadness, that to hold power it was necessary to live with one's brains, and for his part he lived the life of the heart.

The sixth day, he sounded the praises of good King Henry, that king who wished every Frenchman had a fowl in his cooking-pot, the only king whose memory lives amongst the people.

The fifth day, he wrote at the head of his newspaper: 'If I were the President of the Republic.'

Ah, if Timothy were the President, what golden days those would be for the people! Rest, tranquillity, and good food; such would be the privileges of the poorer classes. As for the well-to-do classes, every one would have a piano, a carriage, and a box at the Italian opera.

The monarchy promised a fowl in the cooking-pot once a week. It promised, and did not give it; for good King Henry was fond of drawing the long bow.

The republic is more generous. For the re-

public is everybody's government, as the monarchy is the government of one man.

'If I were President of the Republic, the people would have a fowl in their cooking-pots every day. Yes, every day; only on Fridays that fowl would be a carp. Religion must be respected.'

But why should the fowl be in the cooking-pot? Ah, I see there another proof of the meanness of the good king. You only put old fowls in the cooking-pot after they have laid for years, and dragged on a bony old age on their deserted perches. That shows how kings treated the people! A little wretched fowl-broth once a week; and the best of kings did not even succeed in that.

Such is not the treatment which a republican people has a right to expect from a worthy government!

'If I were President of the Republic—I would that the printer could engrave these words in golden characters — if I were President of the Republic, the people should have two dishes of

meat at their choice, a dish of vegetables, and dessert with wine at their pleasure, like at a restaurant. And I should not busy myself with politics. But I shall never be President!'

The following day, Timothy said to his readers: 'Why not?'

The next day: 'You demand it.'

The third day before the elections, his article was headed: 'It must be.'

Never did a ready-made-clothing emporium for men and youths employ a more coercive system of propaganda.

The three last articles were dithyrambic. I don't mean to say that they were in verse, but they were in rhymed lines, divided into couplets, to be sung to the tunes of 'Jenny l'ouvrière,' and 'T'en souviens tu, disait au capitaine.' Such effusions cannot be reproduced; one must be satisfied with a short account of what they contain.

During the last three days, the legion of carriers of the *Petit Journal*, which formed an independent gendarmerie, distributed to the subscribers with each paper a sheet of tickets bear-

ing Timothy Primm's name. They added to them picture-books printed at Epinal, and cleverly coloured, representing the history of France in twenty-four pictures, with the title of *Timothy Primm's History of France.* The first picture represented the anointment of Clovis at Rheims. Then the Soissons vase, Roland at Roncevalles, Jean Bart, Napoleon, and many other things. The last leaf was entitled 'The President of the Republic.' This was a personage represented sitting, crowned with laurels, and surrounded by an atmosphere of electric light; he held a pen in his hand, and was writing *Le Petit Journal.* But the highly practical part of this invention was, that between each picture and the following one was a voting-ticket, free, with the inscription:

'*Election of August* 30*th.*
For President of the Republic,
TIMOTHY PRIMM.'

And the cover bore beneath the title the following information, that none might remain in ignorance:

'It is the first duty of a citizen to place his vote freely in the electoral urns in order to exercise his rights, and to contribute according to his power to the government of his country.

'To exercise the right of voting, he must freely choose in this copy-book one of the tickets which it contains, fold it in four, with the writing inside, so that what it contains may not be seen, and deposit it in the electoral urn, according to the law.

'Paris, August 30, 18—.'

Is it necessary to say it? Timothy Primm was elected by a large majority. Far from being unpopular in the towns, this election was received in the large and populous centres with a regular explosion of good-humour.

A certain number of tickets were found in the ballot-boxes which puzzled the searchers extremely. In the whole of France, 53,310 'Anointments of Clovis at Rheims,' 1,933 'Jean Barts,' and 14,719 'Presidents of the Republic,' were discovered, and all this in coloured engravings.

Some levelling journalists did not fail to enlarge upon the intelligence of the country people; but more enlightened minds affirmed that the 53,000 'Anointments of Clovis' were a witty protest proceeding from men deeply attached to unchanging principles, and who thought it ingenious to answer the presidential election by slipping into the urn a picture of the most august ceremony of the hereditary monarchy.

When the result of the voting was proclaimed at Paris, a joyful crowd, whose gaiety had taken the shape of enthusiasm, rushed to the offices of the *Petit Journal*, to carry the new President in triumph. He submitted to it with the simplicity of a truly great man. He was in his office receiving the congratulations of some of his friends; he only asked for a moment, took a dozen of manuscript sheets out of his desk and slipped them into his pocket. The cashier of the newspaper, a hunchback filled with malice, bent towards him, handing him his hat.

'Well,' said he in the ear of the triumphant hero, 'the farce is played.'

'Not at all,' said Timothy, in the tone of a president; and then, lowering his voice, 'What farce?' and he winked at the little hunchback as if he were still a humble journalist.

When Timothy took up the helm of the state he did not forget his origin. He continued to enrich the *Petit Journal* with his prose even whilst attending to the business of the country.

'Let me alone,' said he to Timothy Frime, a young athlete ambitious of replacing him; 'tis only for fifteen days, that I may let off fifteen articles I had got ready beforehand.'

The first of those articles was entitled 'If I were King;' which has been set to music. The flexible talent of the President shone forth in all its elasticity in his clever variations on an already worn-out theme.

'It's a bit of malice on the part of the chief editor,' said he to the Privy Seal, who was complimenting him; 'he's taking advantage of my old copy.'

Timothy, in fact, gave himself up entirely to the conduct of public business. Inaccessible to

all diversions, as grave as an ambassador under a reprimand, he held the reins of the chariot of state with the most imposing *maestria*. But every evening he produced from his pocket a carefully numbered sheet, sent it to the *Petit Journal*, which printed the presidential prose in large characters. Each of the articles entitled 'If I were King' developed with exuberance all the arguments in favour of royalty which may be found in fable or in history.

Let us add, for the sake of justice, that the President was in no respect the accomplice of the journalist, and even seemed rather ashamed of sharing in his individuality. In his speeches, in his messages, in his familiar answers, the Republic was the string upon which he harped. But what then? He had but one voice, whilst the *Petit Journal* had a hundred thousand, a thousand times more than the 'Rumour' of the ancients.

One has no idea of the strength of reiteration; 'tis only nervous people, who are familiar with the effects of a barrel-organ, who can form some vague conception of the excitement produced on

the mass of the nation, already enervated by the agitation of the election, by the daily repetition, accompanied by the whole orchestra, of the grand air, 'If I were King.'

The sneering curiosity of the towns, the bewilderment of the country, the indignant but measured astonishment of the press, had changed at the end of a week not into enthusiasm, but into anger, and into that nervous exhaustion which fits or rage induce in individuals.

'There must be an end to this.' Such was the universal opinion; business was coming to a stand-still, the army was growing anxious, the country was suffering.

On the morning of the ninth day, a deputation of generals met a deputation from the Court of Cassation in the President's antechamber. The object was to implore him to accept the throne; and they were very nearly coming to blows on a question of precedence, such was the tendency of the nervous fluid accumulated in the nation to seek a violent outlet. At the same moment, each of the legislative chambers spontaneously, with-

out seeking advice, drew up in secret committee an address inquiring of the President if he would deign to accept the title of king.

'I will do as the nation desires,' answered Timothy to everybody; and published his ninth article.

On the tenth day, a law prepared, drawn up, and voted as a matter of urgency, summoned the people to the poll on the thirteenth day. Timothy, after dispatching his prose to the newspaper, and ordering the voting-tickets, wrote a few words to Messrs. Christofle, goldsmiths and manufacturers of plated wares, and slept the sleep of the just.

On the fourteenth day, the result of the voting was declared; it was universally favourable, two hundred and some thousand weaklings having alone had the baseness to oppose the national will.

The same day, Messrs. Christofle sent the new king the complete set of regalia he had taken care to order beforehand; not that that celebrated house had had the time in three days to prepare so much jewelry, but fortunately in its workshops were found ready for expedition regalia in

the most exquisite taste, quite solidly enough electro-gilt for the usual duration of a French sovereign's reign. They were just going to pack them up for Caffraria—the English Government had ordered them for a king of that country; but it could not be helped, the negro would have to wait, and a little extra wadding in the crown sufficed to adapt it to the French king's measure.

They say that when Timothy, on his return at night to his apartments, after leaving the council of ministers, saw the ornaments which had been unpacked and spread out; when he saw the joyful plate sparkling in all its lustre, with the brilliancy and bloom of virgin and untouched gold still fresh upon it—that great prince manifested the only sign of singularity which can in the least degree detract from the glory of his public life. His valet, who was alone present on the occasion, relates (and they have since published the story in Holland) that the king, letting his portfolio fall, burst out laughing; he then stuck his crown knowingly and firmly on his head, laid hold of the sceptre, and broke

into a thoroughly Parisian step, tossing his sceptre about like a drum-major does his cane, and singing the ancient song:

'The flies they held the floor,
Till with laughter they burst;
Till with laughter they burst, lon, la,
Till with laughter they burst!'

It will be asked, what is the moral of this history? It has no moral, for it is not a fable. It will then be asked, how it ended? Like all similar undertakings.

If you go to Brussels, to the Café d'Allemagne, in entering by the passage you will see opposite to you, stuck on a bench, looking at the window-panes with a wandering eye, an old man smoking an old pipe.

That man, whose face is not deficient in a certain majesty, is worn out rather by over-work than by age. He passes the whole of his days in silence: but every day at a regular hour he asks for pen and paper, and dashes off feverishly a dozen pages; then he reads his work with satisfaction, corrects the slips of the pen, polishes

the style, and becoming gloomy again, cuts the written pages into long spills, which he uses as pipe-lights until the following day. He hates newspapers. If you unfold one near him, he retires anxiously into his corner; if you lay it on the table, he will go away, unless the waiter removes the disturbing object. He is said to be 'made of gold.' Talk to him, he will answer you discreetly and cleverly; make inquiries about his life, about the past, he will grow taciturn, and getting up to go away, will answer, 'I have killed the goose with the golden eggs.'

The waiter at the café pretends that he is a French banker who has been unsuccessful. The French minister at Brussels alone knows that it is the ex-king Timothy I., the head of the seventh or eighth dynasty. If the old man could learn to forget, he might be happy in his home; he has married in Belgium a Flemish woman, an excellent housekeeper, who makes pastry remarkably well, and who has made him the happy father of twelve pretenders.

Versailles, Sept. 20, 1871.

For my Parents.

I.

Saturday, November 25, 1871.

THE history of this day is certainly worth relating: it is one of the days of my life in which I have most suffered. Since I left the Commune, I have only suffered one moment's anguish; that was in the month of May, when I was hiding in Paris from the pursuit of that unpleasant Assembly. A Versailles newspaper published an act of accusation, as well got up, certainly, as in a *feuilleton* novel, which proved that I had received under such and such circumstances a certain number of hundreds of thousands of francs for giving up Paris to M. Thiers. That impudent accusation overwhelmed me for a moment; I feared to be unable to purge myself from the calumny. But since that time, since

my arrest by the victors, every phase of the trial, every attempt of my adversaries against me, has shown my character in its true light; so that, if they put me to death now, it will avail them nothing, and they will have committed a murder most dangerous to themselves, their system, and their children.

I am very quiet in my prison, worrying myself but little and seldom as to the decision which will be come to concerning me.

Nine days ago the Commission of Pardons met, and its secret, not to say shamefaced, deliberations ended yesterday.

The result is not yet known; but the manner of those poor devils shows clearly that they mean to have recourse to rigorous measures: nothing is so terrible as frightened people. Three days ago a report of my execution and of that of Ferré was published. It was only, says the *Presse*, a 'trial-balloon,' to test opinion. Yesterday, at an appeal from the *Constitutionnel*, several young men came over to Versailles from Paris to ask for my pardon, and intercede *in extremis*. Respectful and

discreet, they chose to represent them five of their number, who could only see M. Thiers for a moment, but were received by M. Barthélémy St. Hilaire. Thiers, who was getting into his carriage, refused to hear them. 'This step can only be injurious to *those* you wish to save,' said he, with some emotion, it appears, in spite of the small number of the petitioners. Barthélémy was more explicit; his teeth were chattering: 'You will prevent the Assembly from returning to Paris! You have a Republic; what more can you need? You are exasperating the Commission of Pardons! After all, you are not so very numerous.'

In reply to this faithful expression of the thoughts and policy of the Government, and in particular to the last sentence, my friend Baihaut answered: 'If you don't think us sufficiently numerous, ten thousand of us will come to-morrow, if that suits you.'

To-day Joly came to see me. He knows nothing, excepting that the Commission separated definitively last night, adjourning to December 4th,

after having decided the ten appeals which had been submitted to them.

I saw my relations the day before yesterday morning. My mother and my sister came in all haste, to warn me that a rumour was gaining ground amongst the members of the Commission to the effect that I had asked the War Minister, shortly after March 10th, for a step which he had refused me. I at once wrote a letter, addressed to my mother, giving the lie to that rumour, intended to calumniate me at the last moment.

Yesterday I saw them again in the parlour. My mother and sister had passed the preceding evening in waiting for the members of the Commission; they had broken up their sitting very late, and my relations saw them pass without daring to go up to them. They did not look like people who had just pronounced a death-warrant; they walked lightly, being very hungry and in a hurry to get to dinner. No, they did not look wicked! Very late in the evening an English journalist had sent a line to my parents to say that all was

well, and that he would not leave Versailles without letting them know it. My father went at once to communicate this news to M. Passa. 'I have come to tell it you, that you may have a good night's rest.'

To-day, when they arrived in the parlour, my sister's face was quite upset, and she had just dried her tears. 'She has got a bad cold,' my mother said. My mother looked very pale, quite pale. Little Sarah kept her veil down, as if from coquetry, and tried to look as if she had been quite calm; from time to time I caught a contraction of the lips, but she did not cry. My father remained in the background as usual; his face shows no emotion; but I love him too well not to understand that he suffers all the more at bottom; and I bitterly repent having caused such deep and cruel sorrow to my beloved father.

I can't bear them to make my parents suffer. For my part, I am thick-skinned; and I feel so little anxiety about the possibility of my approaching death, that I sometimes wonder if it be not morbid insensibility on my part. But what I can-

not understand is, that by thus deferring their decision, and hiding its purport when they have arrived at it, they should make my parents undergo a long agony—they, whose only crime is to have taught me to love my country.

Something has been decided, and silence is kept, therefore the decision must be a fatal one; such is the conclusion arrived at by my parents.

'Don't exasperate the Commission of Pardons.' That speech of Barthélémy's is worthy of being framed. What! here is a commission let loose into the arena like an infuriated bull, excited by the cries of the spectators, bewildered and maddened, and you go and speak to them of pardon! You must wish to provoke and to defy them! 'Do not exasperate the Commission of Pardons.'

The sight of my parents cuts me to the heart. My mother was telling me of steps taken yesterday—all of a sudden she stopped short: 'I can't go on! I don't remember! I am going mad!' My sister, who was calmer, took up the story, which I no longer listened to. I saw them and heard them—that was everything. I cared but

little for the remainder. To-day it's my mother's turn to be calm and my sister's to lose her head. Yet we were quiet last night; M. Passa had reassured us. 'But I feel confident,' said my mother, 'I feel confident they won't harm you.' 'Father, speak of something else, of Fort St. Margaret, of my last drawing, of the one I am making; my mother has made me promise her two, and I am just doing the second to-night. I am so happy to be able to do anything for her.' The little girl is not actually crying, but her heart is full. 'And you, too,' said I; 'you, too; they have made you suffer!' Thereupon she bursts out sobbing; her strength has come to an end. My poor little god-daughter, my poor little friend; they are tearing her poor little heart. But the wound will close, my little darling; I know that no one will take your old brother's place; but there is room enough in your heart for many a new friendship. But take good care of the others: they have been so long used to love me, that I fear—I fear much for them when they will no longer have me to devote themselves to.

The parlour is a little cage about a metre square and three metres high. Behind it there is a door; on the sides, brick partition walls; in front, waist-high, a double grating formed of wire netting, with meshes about an inch in diameter. The two gratings are about half a metre apart. Opposite to this cage is a slightly deeper box, which opens also breast-high, but without a grating, on an intermediate passage, where the warder is placed. They are all four in that box. When we are in a good-humour, we call it our Punch theatre, because all the personages are squeezed as close together as on the stage where the great drama of Punch is represented. But the drama now being played is of a different character. The warders charged with the control of our wards are not bad fellows. Generally, it is an old soldier who has served in the Crimea, or under Lamoricière, and who now gains his bread at that pitiful trade.

When the regulation half-hour has elapsed, he goes and opens the door behind my relations: 'Ladies and gentlemen, time is up.' Then my

sisters hang each in her turn to the first grating, press their faces against it, and send me a kiss, which I return through the second grating; and then each in turn has the right to be the last to go out, so as to see me a little longer. 'Until the day after to-morrow,' we say when we separate. Tears are kept for the outer passage.

To-day those poor dear faces were downcast and discouraged. 'We have been patient so long,' said my mother, 'we have no strength left.' She says but little; but she looks at me with a concentrated attention, as if to engrave my features on her memory. For a moment the warder leaves us to admit other visitors. She clings with her hands to the grating, pressing as close to it as she can. 'My son, my good son, my darling, I love you! They won't harm you!'

When the half-hour has elapsed, I am allowed to embrace them in the office. They only come two at a time, that supervision may be easy. Those embraces cause them anxiety: they might bring me poison. The director of the prison is a faithful administrator. So many pounds of living

flesh have been confided to his care. He must make over that living flesh either for the hulks, or for the executioner, or even, should it so happen, for liberty; and I feel certain that is what would please him best. To commit suicide, to destroy oneself, would be to commit a bad action, to deprive him of his position, to ruin his prospects, 'and,' said he, 'you would not wish it.' He confides his anxieties to me; he tells me how much confidence he has in me; and yet he takes his precautions. This evening I was sewing on a button. The needle bent under my fingers. I look at it. It is a handsome brand-new needle, which they have put in the place of the two old steel needles I had. They have even taken the trouble to thread it like the others.

I shall see my relations to-morrow. 'I have comforted your mother,' said the director. 'That poor lady asks me questions which embarrass me extremely. She asks me if I know anything. I know absolutely nothing, I give you my word of honour. But I comforted her. "You will see your son to-morrow," I told her. "To-morrow is

Sunday; and executions never take place on Sunday—the law forbids it. So you may make your mind easy."' If that does not comfort my mother, she must be very hard to please.

M. Passa came after my relations. He brought me some chocolate; and if they were to shoot me to-morrow, they would find my pockets full of it; for I had already a quantity of it. He brought me something better also—his true friendship and his good heart. We are really fond of one another; we understand each other. It is a true happiness for me to have met him. He has every form of delicacy. My dinner was on the table... He did not wish to disturb me; but after one or two mouthfuls, the remembrance of my dear parents and of their sadness seized me by the throat. I got up, and I began to shed tears.

To die young, by a rapid death, by an honourable death, to leave a respected name and a courageous example, is not a fate to be bemoaned. My death will be a hundred times more useful than my life has been—more useful than a long and well-filled career. I have nothing to com-

plain of. But why do they torture my parents and my sisters? It is so easy to kill a man—such quick work. Why, then, do you hesitate to unsheathe the rusted sword of your justice?

11 P.M.

II.

Evening of November 26th.

I AM broken down with sorrow. It is an effort for me to pronounce a single word. Yesterday evening, whilst I was writing, I was copying a drawing for my mother; and I gave it her to-day. It represents a poor woman with three little children. She is suckling the youngest; another one has climbed up on her back; and the oldest is standing beside her. When we were children we gave names to the personages of pictures. I said to myself, as I was copying this one: 'Tis my mother, with her three little children.' The little boy is clad in poor clothes, which look like a theatrical costume—a little jacket with flaps, a laced waistcoat, and above all a very large misshapen felt hat hanging down his back, in which

is piteously stuck a small feather. That shabby feather on the head of the poor little shivering vagabond reminds me of our miserable joys—the ornaments with which we deck our heads, our minds, or our bodies, and beneath which we shudder with cold, weariness, or sorrow.

Towards eleven o'clock I had finished drawing and writing. Then, when I was pacing up and down my cell, I remembered a speech of my mother's. 'Do you think,' said she, clinging to the grating, 'do you think they would help you to escape if we gave them money — if we gave 20,000 fr.? We have got that sum.' Poor mother! You have 20,000 fr., you have made money of all your poor resources, and you want to know if it is enough for the ransom of your son. No, my mother; it is not enough. If I had sold my country, and delivered up her army to captivity, then we should have millions; and that would suffice. No one would be found to condemn us, no one to execute us, no one to arrest us. But 20,000 fr.—you are joking!

I was deeply touched by that mad determina-

tion to save me by all possible means. 'Could you not file the bars of your window? Could you not get out of the prison in M. Passa's place, when he comes to see you?' When I thought of all that, and, above all, of the idea of collecting 20,000 fr., and of offering them to buy my life, I was moved almost to tears. But the door of the cell has a small window in it, where the warder on his rounds frequently comes and looks in. Must those people be made the confidants of my sobs? They are honest folks. Though they be jailers, they would be capable of trying to console me: 'Now then, M. Rossel, you must not believe that. I don't believe it. . . . And then, you know, there is nothing certain as yet.' I put out my candle, and walked up and down by the light of the night-lamp which, according to regulations, is placed in every cell. 'Twas then that I cried and sobbed to my heart's content, stopping in the corner close to the door, where one can't be seen, resting my face against the wall, and crying out in a low voice, 'O, my mother, my poor mother!' . . .

Tears are painful to me—'tis so in our family

—they won't flow. I would have wished to satiate myself with tears; but my sorrow accumulates within, and does not reach my eyes.

Towards midnight I went to bed; and almost immediately the course of my ideas underwent a change. After all, thought I, how many mothers every day lose a beloved son without being able to resist death! The world is full of similar sorrows. And I, what better death could I wish for?

'And yet, how many things in me are opposed to death?' said I. 'Though I do not complain, I feel that I have a right to be pitied. I have not lived enough. I want to work, to think, to act, to love—above all, to love. My lungs are made to breathe for a long time yet, and my heart to beat. It is not natural to die thus.'

My thoughts fly so swiftly that I can hardly follow them. I am thinking how rapid are these last hours, and how the perspective of the past and the future are changing constantly. I am no longer what I was yesterday; whole pages, as it were, are erased from my memory. An air of Mozart has just passed through my brain. What

business have those joyful notes here? Was it I who knew and liked that air? I no longer remember it, and seek it in vain.

How many sensations, how many sentiments are thus erased, never to reappear! But how much sorrow, how much anguish has also disappeared! How many incorrigible faults of which I shall not again be guilty, how many bitter reveries which will no longer come to worry me! I salute Death the deliverer: what he brings me compensates me for that which he takes away.... And yet I thirst to live and to love.

I have heard the third quarter after twelve strike. I study in my mind the elements of the great problem—being, self, the organic tissues, the result of the action of the organs, the result of the impressions of the affections, of the motions—where is the effect and where the cause. I fall asleep in dreaming of all this.

I dream. I dream that I am walking in the narrow prison-court, and that my parents are brought to see me. I dream that I have thrown myself in my clothes on the bed in my cell, and

I have fallen asleep; it is one o'clock in the morning, voices are heard at the door, it is opened, they come in; I am instantly on my feet. They seem vexed to have found me dressed. A thin and aged priest, whose face is unknown to me, enters the room. I hold out my hand to him; behind him enters old Breuil, the ordinary warden of my passage. He says a few words to me, and tries to get me to look out of the window; but I watch him, and see that he wants to throw himself upon me to slip on the strait-jacket; the priest holds my hand. My first thought is, 'Then the execution is definitively decided upon?' I struggle with Breuil, who does not succeed in seizing me; the priest has sought refuge at the bedside. I throw myself upon my back, and kick out at Breuil.

At that moment I awake in reality. It is not yet daylight, but the flourish of the réveillée sounds forth from the neighbouring barracks, and its joyous notes are several times repeated. I fall asleep again, and do not wake until ten in the morning.

My relations are to come towards eleven. I

shall be allowed to see them without the gratings, and even to converse with them. It will be in an empty cell: the director will be present, and it is probable that M. Passa will come. At a quarter past eleven they come for me; 'tis the Abbé Ferrand, my good Abbé Ferrand. He does not resemble the priest of my dream. He knows nothing, he is full of hope; he has read my book, and compliments me about it. He would like to have time to talk to me, and I should also like it; but they come and warn us that my relations are there, and press him to end his visit. We are both miserable at being obliged to separate thus and without telling each other anything.

They come to lead me to the parlour, to put me in cell No. 2, where they have placed chairs. They arrive and we seat ourselves. The director has quite got over his fears, and allows me to sit between my mother and sister. My father is not there; he is gone to M. Thiers. M. Passa takes his seat somewhat farther off; little Sarah before me, on my right. They have promised not to cry. M. Passa has told them that I shed tears

yesterday, and has made them promise to be calm; he has taken the little one to spend the evening with his children.

My father arrives. M. Thiers could say nothing to him; 'he knows nothing, and he is not the master.' Father had asked to be shown up to him; he was told he must speak with M. Barthélémy. He entered, and said to M. Barthélémy, 'I must see M. Thiers.' M. Barthélémy hesitated, oscillated, sought to put off. 'I won't wait to defend my son until all is over. I won't go away without having seen M. Thiers: you can turn me out, if you like. I shall wait until the guards arrive.' M. Thiers comes in. My father speaks to him forcibly; he tells him I have not had judges, but assassins, and gives him proofs of it. He has written to him twice the previous day, to set forth the moral side of the question, and he brings him a third letter completing his statements. He will publish those letters. 'France must judge; you can't assassinate a child!' How great my father is, and how good! How energetic he proves to be on important

occasions, and how peaceful in his daily life! Indifferent to what is petty, incapable even of seeing the pettiness of others.

A newspaper declared that my sentence was commuted to twenty years' imprisonment with hard labour. Hard labour! The very notion makes the director indignant. We are not shocked by it in the least, neither my parents nor myself. Who can sully my honour? Is it not superior to such trifles? My relations would be only too happy were I condemned to hard labour: it would mean that I should live.

Joly came to see me towards four o'clock; he said, like M. Passa, like my relations, as I say secretly to myself perhaps, 'It is impossible!' But he is also dreaming of impossible expedients. He has seen M. Thiers, he is going to return to the Prefecture and try to find out something. He has written, 'The sentence is illegal, contrary to law; the Commission is incompetent, one-fourth of the seats of the Chamber were vacant when it was named. The meeting of the Assembly must be waited for.' It will take

place on Monday week; but Monday is very far from me.

We enter into conversation. What will be our future and the country's? We are in the hands of the soldiers! You will repent—you, the Republicans—that you did not act as I did. One must be very ignorant of the nature of our Revolutions not to understand the necessity of joining the most extreme party. On the 18th of March, the army, France, and the Republic were with the Republicans; on the 19th they were with the incapables of the Central Committee!... The army is not formidable in itself; it is composed of citizens.... Who knows if I do not carry to the grave with me the secret of those questions which I have been studying for years?

What a mistake it will be, if they kill me! Once I am dead, I shall be unassailable. Death is my triumph. I have broken the deceitful bond which binds soldiers to their leaders, treacherous and infamous though they be. I have proved that that yoke may honourably be thrown off. If courageous and patriotic officers yielded to un-

worthy demands, accepted flight, capitulation, and civil war with every one, it was not owing to the fear of death, but to the fear of dishonour. You have no longer that resource: all will have learnt from me that there are moments when a disciplined soldier may and should disobey without fear of degradation.

Joly asks permission to embrace me when we part; he is much moved. We refer to our next meeting. In the course of conversation I had said to him, thinking of my dream, 'I trust that when the final order comes they won't put me in a strait-waistcoat.' He has spoken of it to the director, who came shortly afterwards to my cell, and talked to me lengthily; he managed to explain to me, lengthily also, that the strait-waistcoat was never used except in cases of madness or fury. I could hardly make myself heard; my voice was weaker than usual, and a little hoarse.

The most difficult moment in the whole day to get through—I have often felt it in this solitude—is the moment which precedes nightfall. If one were happy, one might love that moment

when external objects fade away into night, and when deep thoughts have double strength on that account. One is more completely oneself; and 'tis then that I feel the most dejected. But that dejection disappears when the lights are lighted; and I have felt a real relief in writing down all these sad remembrances.

'Those trials are strengthening,' said M. Passa this morning. 'Tis true they are strengthening and wholesome. I have never enjoyed better moral health than when enduring hard trials; during those bitter moments all mean and frivolous things grow indifferent to me.

What did he want? What did he aim at? What was his ambition? How am I to reply to those questions? In hands other than my own my ideas seem utopian. Besides which, I have not studied how to teach or to write, but how to act. I do not classify methodically, in a theorist's pigeon-hole, every element of action which I examine in books, or in the experience of men, but I seek for its present application, which undergoes a daily transformation. Were I older, my

ideas would have taken a definite form, and I might have put them in writing; at present I could only have put them in practice.

When I went to join the insurrection, I did not reckon upon its success, and I did not expect to hold one of the highest ranks in it. I was fulfilling a political duty; when a civil war has commenced, every citizen must stand by his party. As a Republican, my party was at Paris. There are some who call themselves Republicans, and who were nowhere at that time: they let me die to-day, and to-morrow they will set up my corpse as a flag or as a weapon. Let them learn that I am not of them. I am of those who fight; and I would rather join the Virgin's Zouaves than those colourless democrats, who can only give vain words, but not their arms, to their country. I hate nothingness, though it be adorned with the name of Republic or country.

How shall I thank those who have loved me, who have sought to save me, and who have suffered with my sufferings? The first days that I spent here I used to stop to laugh at myself,

at my folly, and my devotion to ideas. 'They are going to shoot you,' I said. 'It serves you right; 'tis the just reward of such flightiness.' But one day I learnt that at Metz they were signing a petition in my favour. That piece of news moved me most deeply—more deeply than anything else, until yesterday.*

After learning that, I walked up and down my cell with a full heart, and, leaning against the wall, I said, 'It is not then a vain thing to devote oneself to others.'

I wish, above all, to thank my comrade and friend Baihaut. They calumniate him now for having stood by me. I know how much sympathy for my misfortunes was felt in his home, and how they shared my sufferings; I wish I could—I wish I dared—say how consoling it was for me to be thus sustained, and what pleasure I feel in guessing so much discreet sympathy. How many unknown people have thus hoped and feared with me! I can't thank them—I can't

* The 25th, when he learnt the step taken in his favour by the students. J. A.

prove to them that I would be worthy of their kind and unmerited confidence; but I wish at least that they should learn that, as I became acquainted with the efforts they were making on my behalf, I no longer felt alone, and that the life I lived was almost a happy one, surrounded as I was by so many unknown friends. Nothing could have produced the dejection of the two last days but the crushing slowness of the delays and uncertainties which overwhelmed me, the rapid alternatives of hope and resignation, and, above all, the sight of my relations' sorrow, and of their last desperate and fatally barren efforts.

I would have saved my country; I can only die for her. 'Tis a highly honourable, and perhaps a very useful fate. Each of us does what lies in his power; some have done nothing more than die, and are still illustrious. A year ago—flying from conquered Metz and the captive army—I passed through Brussels. In crossing a square, I leant out of the carriage to read the inscription engraved on the pedestal of a two-

fold statue, representing two young men embracing one another. There were a few words in two languages. *Den Graafen von Egmont und von Hoorne.* 'To the Counts Egmont and Horn, unjustly put to death on this square by the orders of the Duke of Alba, the . . . .' I read the inscription respectfully, and I perceived, in replacing my hat on my head, that I had saluted the statue. Was it sympathy with their fates? Was it respect for that blood so nobly shed, and perhaps not without results? That remembrance has often sustained me: nations, after many centuries, remember those who loved them and died for them.

Each time the bell is rung and the great gate of the prison opened, I say to myself that they are coming for me; that they are coming, perhaps, to assist me to escape. Some one has dared to mention the subject to M. Thiers. 'It is too late,' he said.

Poor Monsieur Thiers, it will be still later when my blood is on your hands!

'But,' said they, 'you let Beslay go.'

'I should not have had Rossel arrested, if I had only known.'

If I had only known! It is too late! How many times and by how many poor devils have I heard those words repeated whilst France was sinking! And they know less and less, and they wait more and more, and it is always too late.

Suffering and deliverance; those are the feelings which predominate in me as the decisive moment draws near. This excitement and this artificial ending are the slightly forced image of every natural physiological action.

The excitement, however, is not continuous. It has only been developed after repeated shocks and an over-vivid and prolonged expectation. It was Cinq-Mars, I think, who fell into the hands of a clumsy executioner, whose trembling hands multiplied the sword-strokes on his neck. The Commission of Pardons is that clumsy executioner. Besides which, the crisis is intermittent. In the first place, it would be very wonderful if I did not get my eight or ten hours' good and sound

sleep; and then I read, I write, I think of the subjects which habitually interest me—of tactics, literature, and politics. I have even, in the midst of my anxiety, gay moments and humorous whims, inspired by the very nature of my situation. But at bottom I am sad, dismal, cut to the heart. My physical health is slightly affected. A sentence of death is a real illness. I suffer from weariness, loss of appetite, a little fever, and slight agitation. One ends by wishing it over.

Am I really here? It must be a dream. Are they implacably seeking to compass my death in the name of the law? I had dreamt of growing old, of being surrounded by a family, of loving, of bringing up children. I lived upon my dreams.

Have my dreams deceived me, then? The reality, perhaps, may be sweeter.

But let us make an end of this.

My darling mother has sent me this evening two pairs of socks and two towels. She refuses to fear: she would consider the slightest doubt a crime. Let us hope, my dearest—let us hope that what you have sent me will be of use to me; that

will carry us over that famous Monday when the Chamber meets.

I bless you, my mother, my good mother, for all the little attentions you have ever shown me; for the great and holy affection you have lavished on me, and of which I have failed to avail myself to be happy.

How many fragments, how many interrupted undertakings, how many incoherent notes I leave behind me! How many useless sketches! I hope they will not be made known; or if they be made known, that it will be remembered that I died young; and that at my age one has not yet learnt to fix and find formulas for one's thoughts.

November 27, 2 P.M.

IT was not to take place this morning. Yesterday, after having read and written rather late, I remained for a few minutes leaning on my table, thinking of nothing, but experiencing a sensation of great satisfaction. I had difficulty in getting

to sleep; and was suddenly aroused by shouts, like those which pass from sentry to sentry. The first shout seemed to proceed from the sentinel on the outer wall, and the last from the one in the passage. I opened my eyes; there was a glimmer, like the first faint light of a winter dawn. I thought they were coming to take us. *Us* means Ferré and I; strange associates, certainly! Then I vaguely heard a distant clock striking two. When I tried to fall asleep again, the shouts recommenced; scraps of sentences and howls followed; it lasted until about three. I heard them open my cell; then there was a tumult, and the shouts, grown more distant, lasted a little longer. Those unusual noises, and the fitful drowsiness consequent upon them, made me feverish. I was again awakened by the réveillée, then by every trumpet-sound in the barracks, then by every ring at the prison-bell, thinking each time that perhaps they were coming to fetch us. At last, at ten o'clock, I got up.

The director comes in to see me; he knows nothing as yet, and speaks of either possibility.

The man I heard during the night was a prisoner seized with an attack of madness.

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5 in the Evening.

THE internal crisis I have been going through since the day before yesterday has much decreased in violence, it has even almost come to an end. Certainly, this agitated night has hastened the solution. I have occupied my mind a part of the day with mechanical work, which has certainly acted as a sedative, working out logarithms: it leads to nothing and means nothing, but it occupies and reposes. I feel much better this evening than yesterday, but I am going to bed earlier; the sleep I get in the morning is too fitful and broken. And besides, on the whole, I am less afraid to-day than yesterday to be awakened to go 'under fire.' This morning there was a reason for it: the so-called Commission of Pardons had broken-up on Friday after M. Thiers' departure for Rouen; it had therefore been impossible to execute its sentence on Saturday.

There are no executions on Sunday; therefore this morning was the first and probable day. This morning gone by, we fall under the arbitrary rule of delays.

M. Passa paid me a good visit; he is full of confidence. His letter having been published by most newspapers, he has received numerous congratulations. Public opinion is undergoing a change, he said. My father came to him at four o'clock in the morning with M. Amigues* to ask for news. He comforted them, and kept M. Amigues to sleep in his house. My father went back to Paris at seven o'clock in the morning, and did not return here until four P.M.; so that I have only been able to see my relations for a moment, as it was near nightfall when they came. They seem a little calmer. The longer it is put off, the more they hope. They must drive the poor director mad by the warmth of their embraces: yesterday he thought he saw my mother slip something into my pocket; he spoke on the subject to M. Passa, who comforted him.

* The Editor of the French edition.

Otherwise, he is perfectly kind; but the feeling of responsibility slightly tempers his confidence. If I were already dead when they wanted to kill me, it would impede the action of the law; and he would be made accountable for it. I shall see my relations to-morrow morning. These two last days have certainly somewhat steeled me.

To be prepared for everything, let me note down my last impressions as to the art of war. The group of 250 men, the Prussian company, has sound tactical qualities to which I have long been insensible. It is well adapted to the new weapons. But the battalion of 1000 men does not appear to me to have an equal value, and I much prefer our battalion of 700 effective men at most. I have been more than once unjust with regard to the merits of the Prussian armies during the last war. I still feel convinced that we might and ought to have beaten them; but I must admit that they thoroughly understand the politics of war, a science we have forgotten; that they give to logistics all the care they deserve, and thus manage to realise results worthy of being studied. I see

no genius in the last war, but an undoubted talent which would always have preserved them from falling so low and so shamefully as we have fallen.

Last Wishes.

THE papers concerning my *Mission in the Northern Region* are to be sent to the War Ministry, with a sum of about 269 fr. 30 c., if I remember rightly. Amongst those papers will be found a note explaining the expenditure of 230 fr. 70 c., which would make up the sum of 500 fr. advanced to me for the expenses of the Mission. But against the above sum must be set that to which I am entitled according to military regulations, for my pay from the date of my indictment, June 8th, until the day of the execution (or of the final judgment).

The papers were confided by me to M. Brisson, banker at Bourges, and must be in his chest.

November 26, 1871.

To my Father, Mother, Bella, and Sarah.

Evening of November 26.

I DON'T wish to point out, my kind darlings, the use to be made of the few things that belonged to me. I leave so few things, that it is hardly worth while to speak of them. I deeply regret having been unable to contribute to your well-being, and not being in a position thus to thank you for all the love you have lavished in vain upon me. I feel unhappy at the thought that I have all my life been a burden to you. Well, if that life is ended, 'tis not perhaps a misfortune either for you or for me.

My father has so few wants, that I hardly know which of my things would please him. I hope he will keep for his use all that is good amongst them; it will give me pleasure.

My mother has got into the habit of wearing

my watch-chain; I hope she will keep it. I dare not return to her the little Chinese figure in jade which has gone through so many adventures with me. It will be found on my body at the last moment, and I will speak of it to M. Passa; I shall keep it on my breast until the end. I also give specially to my mother the five volumes of *Monteil* she used to like to read.

Bella will take out of my books the six volumes of *Bouillet* (two Antiquities, two History, two Sciences); *Anacharsis*, five volumes and an atlas; a recently published *Ancient History* in two volumes in 12mo, which she began to read at Paris.

Sarah will keep, of course, the little *Don Quixote*, which is much more hers than mine. She will also take the very pretty little Chinese figures, which are in one of the compartments on the left side of my desk, wrapped up in cotton.

Bella and Sarah will divide my books between them, each of them choosing according to her taste, and giving way to the other when both wish for the same book. Bella will keep, besides her

share, the thoroughly tiresome books, such as Greek dictionaries, geometry, &c.

R.

Evening of November 26.

I TRUST, my kind darlings, that you will return to Nîmes directly after the event, without delaying to mourn here; for were you to remain here some time, one grows so foolishly fond of the places where one has suffered, that you would have difficulty in tearing yourselves away. At Nîmes, on the contrary, you will find yourselves in a sympathetic circle, which will help you to bear your sorrow. If you remain at Versailles, the sight of all those officers and judges and deputies, of all those people who continue their business after you have ceased to hope, will only have the effect of souring you and rendering your sorrow harder to bear, and perhaps even detract from its dignity and sincerity, by turning it aside from the remembrance of your son, and changing your regret into spite and hatred against society.

Therefore, having settled all business matters

as quickly as possible, go back to your friends It is even better to go at once, leaving to M Passa and M. Larnac the care of arranging all that you may have to arrange here and at Paris. I will add that the climate of Nîmes suits my father and the children, and I am sure that it will have a favourable influence on the health and development of my little god-daughter.

I advise you to have me buried here. You love me deeply enough not to need the sight of a tomb to remind you of me; I would rather that you should remember your Lisé* of every-day life than that you should seek a material sign, which would rather recall to you my misfortunes and my execution than my character and my affection for you. 'Tis my life and not my death that you must remember. I will add, that you will probably not obtain permission to remove me or to have a tomb built for me, which I consider the emptiest things in the world.

I am very quiet, my dearest ones, whilst I am writing all this. I only suffer on your account;

* Diminutive for Louis, Rossel's pet name in his family. J. A.

as for myself, it is not distasteful to me to die, and to die as I die. I trust in your energy and your virtue under the circumstances; sustain one another, and do not give way to too much regret. Each of you has need of the assistance of the others, and 'tis specially to my sisters that I intrust their parents, and, above all, my dearly loved father.

It is only when I think of him that the tears come into my eyes; for I know how great and good he is. I know well that his affection is all the deeper in that it is less prodigal of demonstrations, and I bitterly repent that I shall inflict so great a sorrow on him. If I have time, I will write to each of you; but you are so thoroughly united in your love for me, that I do not divide you in the love I return.

May God bless and console you, my kind, my best friends!

I love you.

L. NATHANIEL ROSSEL.

Vixerunt.

UNDER the above title, M. Jules Amignes, the French editor, adds the following sketch, which he found amongst Rossel's papers:

The senators of the time of Cicero remind me of the legislators of the present year; but it must be admitted that consuls and legislative assemblies have greatly degenerated since those days.

When Cicero was consul, or, in better words, head of the executive power of the Roman Republic, a Communist, named Catiline, wished to make at Rome something in the nature of an 18th of March; pillage and arson were the least of his plans. The history of them was faithfully related, shortly afterwards, by the victors themselves.

One auspicious evening, the Chief of the Executive Power, seeing that the time was come, had

the principal of the agitators seized and shut up in the public prisons.

But 'tis here that it is easy to perceive the superiority of the ancients over the moderns. At Rome, like in France, the social system is giving way. There, like here, the possessors of land, of slaves, of political influence, strive to maintain their position. On their side is the entire organisation of the public forces; they have a leader, who naturally is the first magistrate of the state.

That legitimate chief lays hold of the disturbers, and locks them up. But locking up is not everything; how are they to be got rid of? The law is a sacred thing in a republic; and the Chief of the Executive Power, should he dare to decide the fate of the accused, would be encroaching upon the public rights. On the other hand, it is impossible to comply with the forms of justice in such a case; the very trial of so many and such remarkable culprits is a crisis in the state. . . .

The following morning, when the consul was asked for news of the prisoners, he found a

charming answer, worthy of that great lawyer; one of those euphemisms dear to polished antiquity. He did not say that he had put them to death, for a consul, in Rome, had no right to put a citizen to death; if he did so, he was nothing more than a common assassin. Cicero did not even say, 'They are dead;' that funereal word not being fit for polite ears. He said, 'They have lived.'

The Roman Republic is saved! . . . It was saved; but the sequel deserves relating.

Some years afterwards, the social question clumsily put by Catiline received a solution; the ex-Chief of the Executive Power, as well as the majority of the legislators he had saved by his eloquence and by his axe, were proscribed in their turn.

They perished, and history has kept a terrible remembrance of the human hunt carried on in the streets of Rome, in the residences of the citizens, in the splendid villas of those sovereigns of the world. Old Cicero, he who had formerly had the unheard-of courage to put Roman citizens to

death without a trial, cared but little to preserve the remains of his glorious life. He made an effort, however; he started off in his litter from his beautiful house at Tusculum, and went as far as the sea-shore, where a vessel was waiting to take him to a place of safety.

But sea-sickness frightened the old man; he got into his litter again, and was going home, when he met the soldiers furnished with the Triumvir's order. Nowadays a detachment of gendarmerie would have been sent on the same duty. At a sign from the brigadier the porters stopped, and the old man, putting out his head, saw how the case stood. 'Approach,' said he to the veteran charged with the fatal order; 'approach, and show how you can strike.'

In those days heads were cut off, and it was only when they were produced that the slayer received his salary, the premium fixed upon each dead man. The head was taken to the Triumvir Anthony. Lawyers often say imprudent things. Cicero had formerly spoken ill of Anthony's wife, whose name was Fulvia, I believe.

Fulvia, when she saw the head, took a long pin from her hair, a gold pin, and pierced the tongue. The orator's head was then exposed on the tribune, whence harangues were delivered.

Cicero had saved Rome from Catiline. What would Catiline have done worse than Octavius?

There are days when one likes to tell oneself old stories. The day after to-morrow, fifteen legislators will discuss whether or not they shall put me to death to save the Republic.

The old story is not ended. When that generation had passed away, the social revolution was consummated. The old structure had perished, but the plebeians, tired of getting knocked about in following the Gracchi, or Mariuses, or Cæsars, the plebeians had withdrawn from public life. If they gave them bread and pleasant amusements, they were only too glad to keep quiet.

As for the *bourgeoisie* (I say the *bourgeoisie*, and not the nobility), however much Cicero's exploit may have saved them, their reign was ended. They retained their fortunes, their rank, their magistracies; with this difference, that

amongst the citizens there was a man called Cæsar, or the Emperor, or the Prince, who, from time to time, would send to a rich or influential *bourgeois*, to let him know he was to kill himself; and that *bourgeois*, who may have been called Seneca, had leave to assemble a few friends, give them a good dinner, and talk quietly with them whilst his veins were being opened. The plebeians looked on and cared not at all; they no longer had any interest in the government of the country.

'Twas thus that Cicero the Consul saved the Roman Republic. He committed a crime, 'tis true; but the greatness of the results obtained served as his excuse and added to his glory.

November 1871.

THE END.

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